



"HERE COMES TOWARDS US ONE WHO WEARS ON HIS HEAD THE HELMET
OF MAMBRINO."

[See p. 260.]

TALES OF MANY LANDS
LEWIS MARSH M.A

TALES OF FOREIGN LANDS

Illustrated
by
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STOUGHTON •





IN this series of Readers an attempt has been made to arouse a real and permanent taste for literature in the classroom, by following the natural development of literature in the world. Thus, in the first two books of the series, the primitive literature of young nations was represented by a number of tales, gathered from the folk-lore and mythology of various peoples of the ancient and of the modern world.

By a gradual and almost imperceptible transition, the folk-tale and the myth develop, with the progress of civilization, into the heroic legend and chivalric romance. A similar transition is effected in the third and fourth books of this series, in which a collection of tales is provided, representative of the world's *Heldengesang*, and introducing the traditionary heroes of many lands and nations. These tales, "half legend, half historic," are the classics of their age, and are no less worthy of admiration than the more finished products of a later period.

Book III deals with the heroes of the Homeland and the Empire, Book IV with those of foreign lands. By their very nature, the stories reflect to some extent the history and geography of the nations whose property they are—an aspect which is not to be regarded as valueless from an educational point of view. To develop this feature, the tales of Book III have been arranged geographically, starting with the Homeland and passing outwards to distant parts of the Empire. In the fourth

book, the plan is historical, beginning with the ancient empires of the world, and following the course of civilization westwards to the modern nations of Europe.

Such a method seems to be the natural outcome of the form of tale chosen for the books. It is hoped that it will serve the purpose of arousing interest in literature as part of the life, part of the history of a nation; and that the correlation of literature with other subjects of the curriculum will tend to widen the range of the pupil's thought, and to open out for him fresh avenues of knowledge.

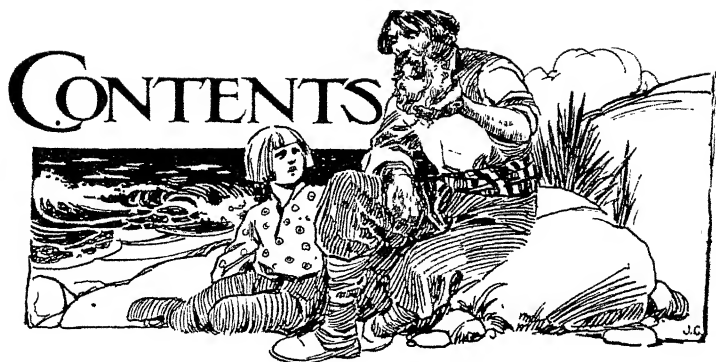
As these books are intended primarily for reading purposes, no extraneous matter has been introduced, with the exception of a few necessary footnotes. Yet it should be remembered that literature, grammar and composition are indissolubly connected with one another, and the teacher should regard each of the books as the basis of instruction in English.

For both oral and written work in this connection, no forms of literature are so well adapted as folk-lore, mythology and romance, if only for the powerful appeal which they make to the imagination. The pupil should be encouraged to reproduce the stories he has read, to construct others of a similar character, and to dramatize the tales which lend themselves to such a treatment. The more varied the ways in which the stories are used, the greater will be the command of language and facility of expression gained by the pupil.

The illustrations, again, should not be regarded as merely ornamental. They provide visual assistance to the pupil in the free expression of his thoughts, and therefore most of them can be made to serve as useful exercises in composition.

L. M.

London, 1912.



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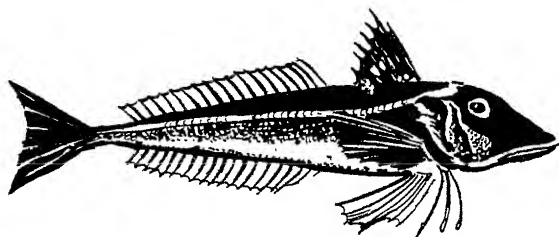
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The Deeds of Gilgames the King



I THE CELESTIAL BULL

It is related that, in times of old, there reigned in Uruk,¹ the well-protected, a king named Gilgames, who of all heroes was the bravest and the strongest. Likewise he was the most handsome of men, and his subjects were captivated by his strength and his beauty. Night and day they cried: "He is the shepherd of Uruk, he is its shepherd and its master, he the powerful, the perfect and the wise."

He was of more than royal descent, for his ancestor was that Shamash, who survived the Deluge, and was afterwards taken up to the abode of the blessed gods, to share with them the joys of immortality.

Now the mighty Ishtar, the goddess of Beauty, looked

¹ A mythical kingdom of Chaldæa.

upon Gilgames with favour. As he walked one day in the garden of his palace, she appeared before him in all her glory and said to him: "Come, Gilgames, be my husband. I will place you in a chariot of lapis and gold, with golden wheels and mountings of onyx: Kings shall bow down before you, the nobles and the great ones; they shall bring to you as tribute the gifts of the mountains and the plains."

The king, on hearing these words, bowed the knee before the goddess and said: "The honour you pay me, O Ishtar, is greater than should be given to any mortal. Yet I will not wed you, for though you love me now, it may so happen that, in the time to come, you will hate me and strike me down."

When Ishtar heard him, she fell into a fury, for she could never brook that her will should be thwarted. Without a word, she disappeared from his sight and ascended into heaven. There she presented herself to her father Anu, and said: "My father, Gilgames has despised me. He has scorned to become my husband, an insult which must not go unpunished. Make me, therefore, a celestial bull, which will destroy him and lay waste his kingdom."

But Anu was not willing to do her bidding, for he did not think that Gilgames was deserving of punishment. Ishtar, perceiving that he hesitated, threatened in her rage to destroy every living thing in the universe, so the father of the gods gave way and created for her a frightful bull, with brazen hoofs and sharp horns of bronze.

This celestial bull was straightway sent to ravage the kingdom of Uruk, and before long, terrible tales came

to the king, of the destruction caused by the fierce brute. Touched by the miseries and terror of his people, Gilgames brightened his weapons, put on his war-harness, and set off alone to fight the monster.

Its lair was amongst the marshes on the banks of the Euphrates, and thither the hero proceeded without delay. Having arrived at the mouth of the dreadful chasm in which the bull had taken up its abode, he blew a long, loud note upon his ivory horn. At once the monster rushed out, bellowing with rage. Fire poured from its mouth and from its gaping nostrils. The tramp of its brazen hoofs shook the earth.

As soon as it saw Gilgames, the bull rushed at him with lowered head, but the king stepped nimbly on one side, and as it passed, he slashed its knee with his sword. Then, before it could stay its mad course, he turned and stabbed it again and again from behind. Nothing daunted, the fierce creature turned upon him, bellowing madly; but the king, dropping his sword, caught the bull by the horns, and exerting all his magnificent strength, forced its head back and farther back until its great neck was broken.

Gilgames then offered up a sacrifice of thanksgiving, and returned to his capital, where he passed through the streets in triumph, greeted by the thankful cries of his loving subjects. He entered his palace, put aside his war-harness, clad himself in white garments and adorned himself with the symbols of royalty. Then he ordered a great banquet to be prepared, and there was much joy and festivity, both in the palace and in the city. And as they sat at meat the courtiers cried: "The king shines

forth among the valiant, Gilgames is glorious above all men." But in his heart the king was not happy, for he dreaded the vengeance of the mighty Ishtar.

II. THE FOUNTAIN OF BEAUTY

That night as Gilgames slept, the goddess came to him in a dream. Awful she appeared in her wrath, and the king could not so much as look upon her countenance. "Do not think," said she, "that, because you have slain the celestial bull, you will escape my vengeance. I will destroy that of which you are most proud, your manly beauty. When you awake, you will find yourself black as night, and so hideous to look upon, that all men will turn from you in horror."

As he listened, the king groaned in agony and awoke, and, behold! he found that it was even as the goddess had said. His carefully curled hair and beard were gone, his once powerful limbs were shrunken, his kingly form was twisted and bent, and his comely countenance was transformed into that of a hideous, black dwarf.

Wild with grief, he leapt from his couch, and ran from his palace into the depths of the woods, there in solitude to hide his shame from the eyes of men.

Day after day he blindly wandered, until he had left the plains of the Euphrates, and had plunged into the desert. Wildly he ran, until he at length reached the entrance of a dark passage which leads into the mountain of Mashu, whose gate is guarded day and night by scorpions with the heads of men.

The scorpion-men are terrible to behold. Their look kills; their splendour overturns the mountains; they



“That night as Gilgames slept, the goddess came to him
in a dream.”

watch over the sun at its rising and its setting. When Gilgames perceived these dreadful creatures, he was seized with horror and dismay, for their savage appearance disturbed his mind.

Yet, strange to relate, the scorpion-men took pity upon him, and having heard his sad story, the chief of them said: "I will tell you, Gilgames, how you may recover what you have lost. You must journey to the Happy Isle at the end of the earth, and seek out the Fountain of Beauty which is hidden there. Bathe yourself in the magic water, and your kingly face and form will be restored to you."

"Show me the way, I pray you," said the king eagerly. "Let me set off in quest of this fountain without delay."

"Be not over-hasty," replied the scorpion chief; "perchance you may not choose to brave the perils of the way. The road is rough, unknown, beset with dangers, and no one of those who have ventured upon it has ever returned."

"I care not," said the king; "I will risk any perils rather than submit to my fate. It is better to die like a hero than to live like a slave."

"Then I will set you upon the way," said the scorpion. "You must first cross the mountain of Mashu, which is clothed in horrible darkness. If you can find your way through the gloom, you will come to a marvellous forest upon the shores of the ocean which encircles the world. Having arrived thus far, you must invoke the aid of Sabitu, the Queen of the Seas, for I can help you no further."

With tears of thankfulness in his eyes, Gilgames bade

farewell to the scorpion-men, and took the steep path, where he was soon lost amidst the darkness which enveloped the mountain. In the dreadful solitude he would without doubt have lost his reason and perished miserably, had he not prayed for the protection of his forefather Shamash. The latter listened to his petition, and caused an arrow of fire to appear in the sky, pointing towards the direction in which he should go.

With the fiery arrow always before him, he ascended the mountain, traversed safely the ice-clad fields at the summit, and made his way down the other side, until at length he issued from the terrible darkness, and saw once more the noontide sun shining gloriously in the heavens. Its beautiful rays tinted with gold the rustling leaves of a forest which lay before him, and shone, far away, upon the waves of the great ocean which encircles the world.

Gilgames leapt and shouted in his joy, and rapidly made his way through the forest, stopping now and again to examine the marvellous trees which surrounded him. And well might he gaze in wonder, for the fruits of these trees were all glittering gems. The boughs of the trees were splendid to behold, for the branches were weighed down with pearls and diamonds, with emeralds and rubies, and all manner of precious stones.

He did not stay to gather any of these treasures, but made his way to the shores of the great ocean, where the sea-waves thundered upon the white, sandy beach. Here he was forced to stand, and he began to grieve because the ocean stayed his steps. But remembering the advice of the scorpion-men, he called out aloud to Sabitu, Queen of the Seas, saying: "Sabitu, aid me

to cross these foaming waves, I implore you. If it can be done, I will cross this tempestuous sea; if it cannot, I will lay me down on the land and die."

The goddess was touched at the hero's grief; she appeared before him and said: "Gilgames, how can you hope to cross this sea? The voyage is difficult, and on the other side lies the perilous Water of Death. Even if you can cross the sea, what would you do on arriving at the Water of Death? Only one mortal has ever succeeded in passing it, and that is Shamash the valiant, who now is numbered with the gods, and dwells in the Happy Isle at the end of the earth."

"Help me, goddess," cried Gilgames, "and I know that I shall not fail. Though hideous to behold, I have still my strength and courage, and I have no fear of any danger which may lie before me."

Sabitu looked upon the hero with approval and said: "I can give you but little assistance. The only person who can bring this enterprise to a happy ending is Urbel, the mariner of Shabash. If it is possible, you shall cross the sea with him. If it is not possible, then you must perish."

Sabitu called out thrice, in a piercing tone, the name of the mariner, and shortly afterwards a small black boat appeared, breasting the angry breakers, and rowed by a solitary figure, enveloped in a great cloak.

Thanking the goddess, Gilgames entered this boat, and took one of the oars, Urbel the mariner having the other. In silence they rowed away into the midst of the surging foam, while the tempest howled around them. For forty days they rowed, and then they came to the Water of Death, where a great whirlpool sucked and gurgled.

Now must they ply the oars with all their strength, for the jaws of the watery abyss open wide to swallow them up. A horror fell upon Gilgames as he looked into the black depths, but he placed his trust in the skill of Urbel the mariner, whose strength and dexterity were marvellous to behold. Thrice they shot round on the edge of the whirl, and then, with a mighty sweep of his oar, Urbel sent the bark flying far away from the swirling waters of the pool.

• Now they rested on their oars, and loosed their girdles, while the boat floated peacefully onwards towards an island which appeared in the distance. Blue were the heavens and bright the sun, and the island shone like a gem upon a sea of gold. As they approached its shores, a very tall and strong man came to the strand to meet them. He was clad in rich garments. On his arms were bracelets of gold, and round his neck was a collar of jewels; and he came forward, bowing courteously, and held out both his hands and said: "Welcome, my son, to this Happy Isle. You have braved many perils and endured many hardships, but your reward is not far distant."

Gilgames knew the man to be his forefather Shamash, and he leapt into the waves and ran to meet him, crying: "O my father, thrice happy am I to hear your words of solace. Lead me, I pray you, to the Fountain of Beauty, into which I may plunge this crooked form and blackened visage."

"First of all, my son," replied Shamash, "you must sleep, so that the gods may bestow upon you the strength to obtain what you seek." So saying, he cast the hero into a deep sleep, which lasted for six days and

six nights. And as he slept Shamash said to his mariner Urbel: "I will prepare a magic broth for the sleeper, so that when he has issued from the Fountain of Beauty, he may return in safety to his country by the great gate through which he has come."

And Urbel replied: "The misfortunes of this man are distressing both to you and to me. Prepare, then, the broth and place it by his head."

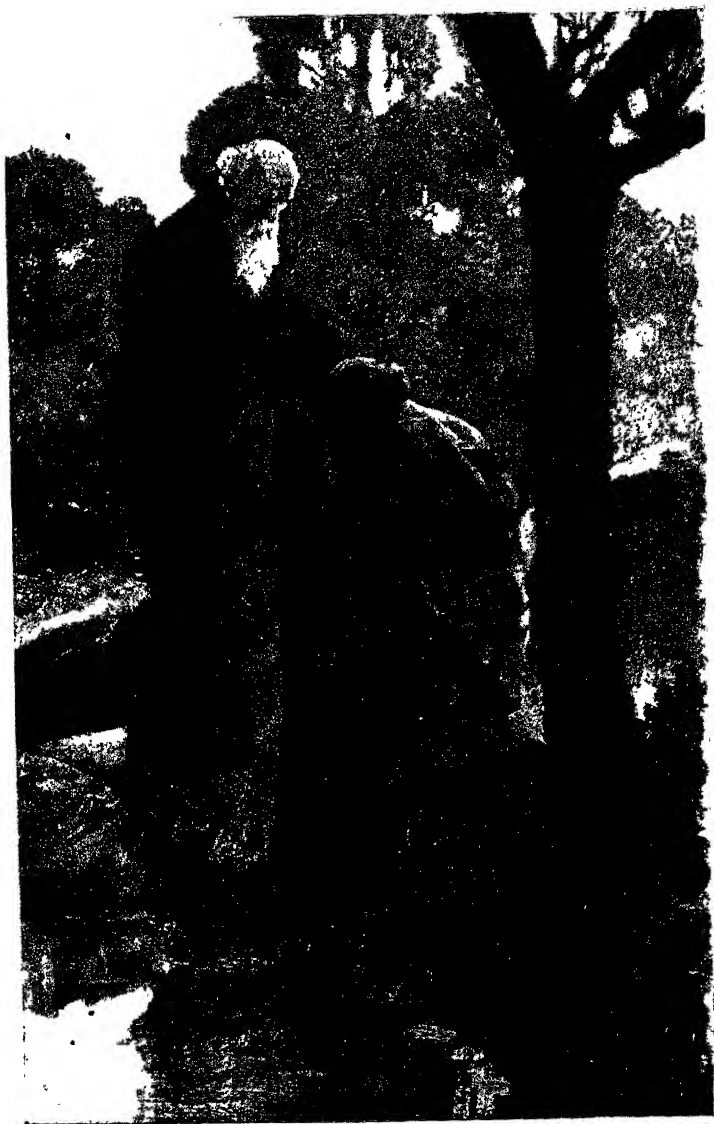
When at last Gilgames awoke, he saw the broth and ate it up, whereupon he arose with the strength of a lion. Shamash then took him by the hand and led him through pleasant valleys, and among waterfalls, and tall trees and strange ferns and flowers, until they came to a sheltered spot where a fountain sparkled and bubbled in a cool marble basin.

"Behold," said Shamash, "the Fountain of Beauty! Bathe yourself in its pure waters, and you will issue forth radiant in health and manly vigour!"

The king at once plunged into the limpid waters; long he remained in the depths of the pool, and when at length he rose again to the surface, his hideous face and form were gone, and he stepped upon the bank with all his former strength and beauty. His eyes shone like an eagle's, and he stood up like a wild bull in his pride.

Then he cast himself on his knees before Shamash and cried: "O father, my gratitude to you is greater than I can tell. Once again I can stand unashamed in the sight of men, for my misshapen limbs have become straight and strong, and my visage is once more fair and comely."

"It is yourself that you have to thank for your trans-



"HE CAST HIMSELF ON HIS KNEES BEFORE SHAMASH."

formation," replied Shamash. "The gods are just, and help him who helps himself. You gained your way hither with steadfast and undaunted courage, and see, you have your reward. Go now, my son; return to rule your people, comforted and of good heart, and may peace and felicity be yours now and for ever."

So Gilgames bade farewell to the noble old man, and took ship once more with Urbel the mariner. Safely they traversed again the Water of Death, and safely passed over the tempestuous ocean, until they arrived at the marvellous forest which skirts its shore.

There the king took leave of Urbel, and set off across the gloomy mountain of Mashu, guided as before by the arrow of fire. At the entrance to the mount, he was greeted by the scorpion-men, who rejoiced to see him in the pride of his kingly beauty. They clad him in a robe of purple, took from their treasures a crown of gold and set it on his head, placed him upon a royal steed, and thus sped him on his way.

With what joy did the hero now ride into his kingdom of Uruk, the well-protected, where his subjects had long mourned him as dead. He was greeted everywhere with glad cries of welcome, and re-entered his palace in triumph. One of his first acts was to beseech the forgiveness of Ishtar; and the goddess, for the sake of his sorrows and tribulations, pardoned him. So Gilgames reigned for many years in Uruk, and as his rule was kind and wise, he was beloved by his subjects and honoured by the gods.

*From the Fragments of a Poem inscribed upon
Tablets discovered in the Ruins of Nineveh.*



The Golden Chest

KING WU was a great conqueror, and had a vast and mighty empire. His lands stretched out to the east and the west, and many kings acknowledged his sovereignty. His councillors were wise and clear-headed men, whose advice was of the utmost value to him, and his fame lives to this day as one of the wisest rulers of the Chinese people.

Now it happened that the tyrant of Shang, in the far north of the empire, rebelled against his rule, so King Wu marched against him with horsemen, spearmen and chariots. In less than three weeks, he completely crushed the rebel hosts, and taught their chieftain, by stern

chastisement, the peril with which all attempts at revolt are attended.

Yet, after this campaign, misfortune awaited the king; for the hardships of the battlefield proved too much for his failing strength, and he fell ill and was like to die. The court physicians tried all manner of cures, but none succeeded, and the king fell a prey to the deepest melancholy. So poets and minstrels were brought from all parts to amuse him; but he cast them forth and would have nothing to do with them.

At last his brothers, the dukes of the kingdom, consulted with one another as to the measures they should take to relieve the serious situation. Two of them said: "Let us consult the oracles of our ancestors concerning the king." But the third, the Duke Chow, formed a different plan, of which he said nothing at that time.

He went out into the open plain, accompanied by the chief officers of the kingdom, all of whom he had sworn to secrecy, and there he caused to be erected four altars, one to the east, one to the west, one to the north, and one to the south. Taking up his position at the southern altar, he faced the north, and began to pray to the last three kings of the realm, for he thought that they would help him. While he prayed, the grand recorder of the kingdom wrote on a tablet the words of the prayer, and they may be read to this day. This was the prayer—

"O illustrious monarchs! King Wu, your chief descendant and lord of this realm, lies stricken with a sore malady and is near death. It is the duty of you three kings in heaven to watch over him and direct his destiny. If he is to die, let me, his brother, take his

place; for I have lived modestly, and have done nothing to make me unworthy of serving those who dwell in the celestial abode. Moreover, I am of little use on earth, while your great descendant is lord of a mighty empire: his people love and reverence him, and beseech him every day to grant them his aid. Let him therefore live, and take me in his stead. I will consult the oracles, and hope to read from them your answer to my petition."

Now these oracles were not images of wood or of stone. No man might behold them, but they gave their answers to petitioners in words inscribed upon stone, and placed within a golden chest which was kept by the priests. So the Duke Chow reverently proceeded to the temple, and unlocked this chest with a key which the chief priest gave to him.

There he found the response of the three kings to whom he had prayed, and it read thus: "We, the former sovereigns of this realm, have listened to the words of our descendant, Duke Chow. There is no need for him to die, for we have been moved by his words, and will preserve the life of King Wu until his full time comes to an end. Thus have we decreed."

The duke was full of joy at the success of his plan, and placing within the golden chest the tablet on which his prayer had been recorded, he locked it up again and delivered it into the keeping of the priests, bidding them say nothing to any man. On the next day, the king rose from his bed, fully recovered from his malady, and with all his happiness of mind restored to him.

Ten years passed by, and then King Wu's span of life came to an end, and he died, leaving his little son

Chang to reign in his stead. As Chang was but a child, Duke Chow was appointed regent of the kingdom, for he was by far the wisest of the young king's uncles; but his power gave great offence to his two brothers, who, in their envy, sought how they might do him harm. Nor was it long before an opportunity came to them, for it is always easy to cast blame upon those who sit in high places.

It chanced at that time that the river Hwang-ho¹ had overflowed its banks, destroying countless numbers of people; and the distress of the survivors was increased by the attacks of roving hordes of wild Tartars from the desert. The people cried out in their woe and said: "The king is young, and he takes no heed of our distress." So Chow thought it well that the king should go forth among his suffering people, that all might see his sorrow.

Preparations were at once made for the royal progress, and before many days had passed, a great cavalcade issued from the gate of the capital. The young king was borne in the midst in a golden palanquin, surrounded by the royal guards, both horse and foot, whilst messengers were sent on in advance to announce his approach.

Before long, the procession came in view of those steep, yellow cliffs, the soil of which gives its peculiar colour to the river Hwang-ho.¹ Then King Chang journeyed amongst his distressed subjects, relieving their wants with liberal gifts of food, clothing and money.

One day, it so happened that the king was borne at

¹ Yellow River.



some distance in advance of the main body of his escort, and travelled along accompanied only by a small guard. Then, as fate would have it, the cavalcade was perceived by a band of Tartar marauders, who bore down upon it mounted on their swift Kirghiz ponies. Never had the young king been in such grave danger, for his guards were quickly overcome. The Tartars were just about to lay hands upon the august person of the king, when they perceived the remainder of his escort charging towards them at full speed, and they were glad to escape with their lives.

This incident gave an opportunity to the Duke Chow's envious brothers to speak ill of him, and they spread untruthful reports throughout the kingdom.

"The Duke Chow," they said secretly, "means no good to the young king. He sent him on this mission with the intention of destroying him, and of seizing the throne for himself."

If Chow had been an evil man, he would have cast his brothers into prison and have struck off their heads; but being of a forgiving mind, and knowing that Heaven always proves the innocence of the pure in heart, he resolved to leave the kingdom until Heaven should show him to be guiltless of any desire to usurp the place of King Chang.

So Chow departed and travelled into the east, leaving the affairs of the kingdom in the hands of his brothers. All went well until the autumn, when the grain was ripe and ready to be gathered. Then terrible storms arose, with rushing winds and blinding rain. Such great storms had never before been known. The wind beat the grain down to the ground, and tore up huge trees by the roots. Houses were destroyed and many people left homeless.

The people of China were greatly terrified, and cried out that the destruction of their crops and houses must be a sign of the anger of Heaven. So the king and his chief ministers went in state to the temple to consult the oracles, and to see if any explanation of the destruction was to be found in the writings contained in the great golden chest. When the coffer was opened, they found there the tablet on which was recorded the prayer of Duke Chow, asking that his life might be taken in place of that of King Wu.

On reading the words written upon the tablet, the

young king turned to the grand recorder of the kingdom and said : "What means this, and why have I never been told of this matter ?"

The recorder replied : "You have not been told, your Majesty, because the Duke Chow commanded me to hold my peace concerning this prayer ; likewise he said that none of the great officers of your kingdom should dare to speak of it."

Then King Chang looked upon the tablet again and wept, saying : "There is now no need to inquire further into the cause of the great tempests which have worked so much harm amongst my poor subjects. Duke Chow was faithful to the throne, and I, being a child, did not know it, but allowed him to be driven from my country. Now Heaven has displayed its wrath against those who spoke ill of him, and has given a sign that he is innocent. I will welcome him back again to my court, where his power shall always be second only to my own."

With these words, King Chang went out to the borders of his kingdom to welcome back his loyal and trusty uncle, and at the same time he sent into exile the two dukes who had spread untruthful reports about him. At once the tempests were allayed ; the grain grew up miraculously in the fields ; the houses which had been destroyed were replaced by goodly dwellings, and the year became the most fruitful in the memory of man.

.From the "Shu Ching," or Book of History.



RUSTUM and ZOHRAB

I. THE HERO OF PERSIA

LONG ago, there lived in Persia a valiant warrior named Rustum, who was dearly loved by his fellow-countrymen for his brave deeds and generous heart. So marvellous were his exploits, even as a youth, that all men stood in awe of him, and believed that his strength and courage were more than human. He spent his days roaming about the world in quest of adventure, accompanied by his horse Rukesh, the most faithful friend a man ever had. Wherever the weak were oppressed, or the innocent ill-treated, there Rustum and his steed would appear, and wrongs would soon be righted, and the evil-doer would pay the penalty of his misdeeds.

Ever and anon, Rustum was recalled from his wanderings by the Persian emperor, who, but for his assistance, would have been powerless to resist the fierce attacks of the Tartars of Turan, commanded by their great King Afrasiab. The latter hoped to make himself master of Persia, and to this end led army after army into that broad realm.

Unless led by their hero, the Persian troops would flee from before the Tartars; but with Rustum at their head, they drove them back time after time, defeating them with great slaughter. The battle being won, Rustum would quietly depart, without waiting for honours or rewards, and resume his lonely travels through the world.

On one of his solitary journeys, Rustum found himself on the borders of Turan, and spent the night, as was his custom, sleeping under the canopy of the heavens. Early in the morning, his horse awoke him by neighing in his ear. Rustum leapt to his feet, and perceiving a band of Tartar horsemen coming towards him, he made ready his weapons to defend himself. But, to his surprise, the leader, whose bearing and attire proclaimed him to be an important prince, approached him with respectful salutations.

"Peace be with you, great Rustum," said he; "I am the King of Kurdistan, and my chief city is not far distant. Come, I entreat you, and be my guest, for it will be a great privilege for me to entertain a hero so illustrious as yourself."

Pleased with these courteous words, Rustum accompanied the king to his capital, where a magnificent banquet was prepared in his honour. After being

sumptuously regaled, Rustum was conducted by his host to the couch on which he was to repose, and throwing himself upon it, he was soon fast asleep.

It was not long, however, before he was awakened by a bright light flashing in his eyes, and looking up, he beheld a beautiful princess standing by his side, followed by a gigantic negro who held aloft a brazen lamp.

"Who are you, and what are you doing here?" he cried.

"I am the king's daughter," replied the maiden, "and having heard that you were in the palace, I wished to see you before you departed. Now that I have looked upon the greatest of heroes, I can go in peace."

Rustum thought that he had never seen so lovely a princess, and on the morrow he went to her father, and asked her hand in marriage. The Kurdish king made no objection, and shortly afterwards the wedding was celebrated with great rejoicings.

But Rustum's restless nature gave him no peace, and he was soon out in the great world again, searching for adventures. During his absence a son was born to him, and the mother called the child Zohrab. She feared to tell Rustum that it was a boy, lest he should take the infant away from her to train him as a warrior. So she sent a messenger to tell her husband that a daughter had been born, and the messenger returned with Rustum's seal ring, which the hero bade her fasten about the child's neck to bring good fortune.

Zohrab grew up a sturdy, handsome boy, fond of the chase and of all manly sports. But there was nothing he loved so much as to listen to tales of his mighty

father whom he had never seen. His eyes would gleam with pride when he heard of Rustum's deeds of valour, and would glow with tenderness when he was told of Rukesh, his father's faithful steed.

"Oh, that I might see my father Rustum!" he would cry, "and that I might stroke the silky neck of his brave horse." And his mother would soothingly reply: "Some day, my son, you shall see both Rukesh and his lord. Till then, compose yourself in peace."

But the day came when Zohrab would bide no longer, and he declared that he was going forth in search of his father. His mother wept bitterly, but she did not attempt to detain him. Providing him with a war-horse and with the finest weapons and armour procurable, she bestowed her blessing upon his enterprise, and bade him farewell.

Zohrab proved himself a son worthy of his great father, and his heroic deeds soon caused his fame to ring throughout the world. Rustum himself heard of his doings, though he little thought that it was his own son of whom all men spoke so well. After many adventures, Zohrab joined the forces of King Afrasiab, and marched against the Persians, always hoping that he would greet his father one day upon some well-fought field.

It was not surprising, however, that he and Rustum never met; for that great warrior, as age crept upon him, grew weary of strife and bloodshed, and retired to a lordly house which he had built for himself amongst the mountains, only issuing forth on those rare occasions when he was persuaded that his emperor could not do without him.

With every battle Zohrab won fresh glory, until he became the commander of Afrasiab's forces. The Tartar king, who knew that he would never make himself master of Persia as long as Rustum was alive, hoped that if Zohrab were kept in ignorance of his father's appearance, he might one day slay him, unwittingly, in battle. Therefore he gave orders that no man should give Zohrab any information concerning his father, and that the young hero's parentage should be kept secret from the Persians. Then Zohrab was sent at the head of a great army into Persia, where he overthrew every general that was sent against him.

II. FATHER AND SON

Upon the defeat of one army after another, the Persian emperor sent in consternation to Rustum, summoning him to come forth once more and take the field in defence of his country. Rustum, however, had no mind to do so, and it was not until the emperor came to him in person and implored his assistance, that he mounted his horse and rode forth to take command of the army.

The two opposing forces met on the sands by the river Oxus, the one commanded by the father, the other by the son, though neither knew it. On the glittering sands they set their camp, and prepared to do battle in the morning. Zohrab slept but little that night, and as he lay awake, he determined that instead of leading his whole force to battle in the morning, he would challenge to single combat the bravest Persian lords, one by one, hoping that amongst them he might meet his father.

No sooner had the grey light of dawn crept into his



tent, than Zohrab sent a herald to the Persian army bearing his challenge. The Persians received the message with dismay, for they knew no champion save Rustum who could hope to stand against the might of Zohrab, and they feared that Rustum would think it beneath his dignity to engage in single combat with any man. So one of the chief officers went to Rustum's tent and told him of this challenge.

"What champion are the Tartars sending against us?" asked the old warrior.

"One named Zohrab," replied the officer, "a hero of great fame, though no man knows his birth or lineage. Still, his strength is like your own, and unless you will help us we shall lose the day."

"I have heard of this young man," said Rustum. "He is a hero such as I would be proud to call my son. But I will not fight with him. I am tried and experienced in warfare, and it would ill befit me to engage in single combat with so youthful a warrior."

"Zohrab challenges our bravest lords," answered the officer, "and if you do not accept, men will say that you fear to peril your reputation with a younger man."

"Wherefore do you say such words?" cried Rustum wrathfully. "What is one man to me, whether young or old, valiant or cowardly? You shall see if I fear for my good fame. Go, say to the Persian host that I will meet this Zohrab; but, for the sake of my renown, I will fight unknown, and with no device upon my armour to betray who I am."

Then Rustum clad himself in plain steel, and strode from his tent to meet his foeman, the horse Rukesh following at his heels like a faithful hound. Through the ranks of the cheering Persians he pressed, without a look or a word to any man, and advanced into the open sands between the two hosts. There he beheld the adventurous youth who had challenged him to battle, and looking at his slender form and comely visage, he was filled with pity for him.

"Young man," he said, "it is better to live than to die. I am a tried soldier, and have fought on many a stricken field, but no foeman has ever been able to resist this good right arm of mine. You are but a youth. Why should you rush to your death? Come with me to my distant home, and be as a son to me, to comfort me in my old age."

When Zohrab saw the mighty form of Rustum and

heard his gentle words, his heart was filled with a great hope, and running to meet him, he cried : "Are you not Rustum? Oh! speak and tell me, are you not he?"

But Rustum thought he asked this merely to be able to boast that once he had challenged such a hero to single combat, so he replied sternly : "Rash boy, are you not content to fight with any one less than Rustum? Well I know that if great Rustum stood revealed before you, there would be no more talk of fighting. Either you would yield to his mercy, or your bones would strew this sandy plain."

His words were a sore disappointment to Zohrab, whose pride was bitterly wounded. Angrily he made reply : "Do you think to frighten me thus? I am no child to shudder at fierce words. You are a warrior of proved valour, I know, and your stature is greater than my own, but no man can tell to which of us the victory this day will go. Lay on, and let us see if you are indeed the better man."

Even as he spoke, Rustum hurled at him his spear, which Zohrab, with a quick leap, avoided. Then the young warrior threw in turn, but his weapon was caught on Rustum's shield. The Persian at once seized his huge club, and struck a mighty blow at his adversary. But again Zohrab sprang aside, and the weight of the club brought Rustum to his knees, where he might easily have been slain by his adversary.

"You strike too hard," said the latter, as he courteously drew back. "Rise, and be not angry. I feel no anger when I look upon you, though why I do not know. Something within me seems to say, 'Let there be peace between this man and you!' Old warrior, let



"The two rushed together with a clash of shields."

us make a truce, and plant into the sand our angry spears."

While he was speaking, Rustum had risen to his feet, trembling with rage. "Talk not of peace to me," he cried. "Before the eyes of the two hosts, you have put me to shame with your girl's skipping tricks. All my pity for you is gone, and I will fight this battle out unto the death. Guard yourself, and let me see if you are as nimble with your hands as you are with your feet."

Then the combat began afresh, and the two rushed together with a clash of shields. Hour after hour they fought, until their mail was hacked and rent, and their strength was well-nigh sped, while around them the silent ranks of the two hosts stood and marvelled. At length Zohrab with his sword smote Rustum's helmet, shore away its plume, and dented deep the steel; but the blade splintered in his hand like glass, and left him standing with the hilt alone.

Rustum's eyes glared with triumph, and he shook on high his spear, and shouted: "Rustum!" Zohrab heard the shout, and shrank back in amazement, dropping the shield with which he was protecting his breast. At once Rustum pierced him with his spear, and, wounded to death, the youth staggered back and sank upon the sand.

Then Rustum said with a bitter smile: "You thought to kill some famous Persian lord to-day, but behold! you yourself lie slain, and by an unknown man."

"Not so," said Zohrab. "Rustum it was who slew me, for that beloved name unnerved my arm and made me drop my shield! But hear this, fierce man, the

38 TALES OF FOREIGN LANDS

mighty Rustum, my own father, whom I have sought throughout the world, he will avenge my death and punish you."

"What talk is this of fathers?" said the warrior. "The mighty Rustum never had a son; one child alone he had, and that was a girl, who doubtless is now by her mother's side."

"You are wrong," said Zohrab, "the child was a boy. If you seek proof, unlace the mail about my neck and you will find the seal ring of Rustum which he bade my mother set there when I was born."

With hasty fingers, Rustum unfastened Zohrab's mail, and there he saw his own seal. He looked and looked in speechless horror, and then he burst into a cry of agony—

"My son! my son!"

A dark cloud passed before his eyes, and he sank upon the ground. But Zohrab crawled to where he lay, and put his arms about his neck, and kissed his lips, and stroked his cheeks to call him back to life.

At length Rustum opened his eyes, and the horror of his deed was too great to endure, and he seized his sword and prepared to slay himself. But Zohrab held his hands, and said gently: "Stay, father, you must not raise your sword against yourself, for you have still great deeds to do. Come, my hours are numbered, put your arms about me, and call me 'son' before I die."

At his words, Rustum's sorrow burst forth in a flood of tears, and mighty sobs shook his great frame. He took his dying son in his arms, and his grief was such that the two hosts could not bear to look upon it. Rukesh, the horse, approached with his head bowed

low and his mane sweeping the dust. Great tears flowed from his eyes, and he moved his head first to the father and then to the son, as if to ask them what their grief could mean.

"Is this, then, Rukesh?" cried Zohrab as he saw the horse. "Often, noble steed, has my mother talked to me of you. She promised me that some day I should look upon your lord and you, but little did she think in what manner it would be."

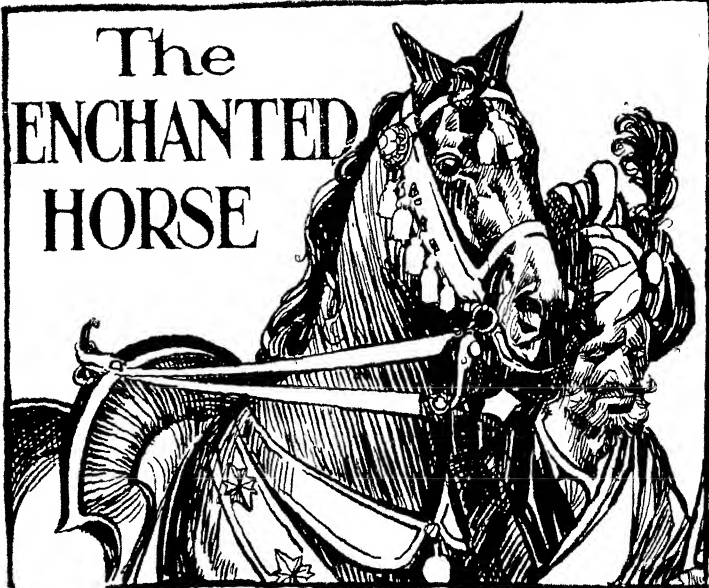
Then Rustum cried aloud in his woe, and prayed for death to come to him. But Zohrab said in a grave voice: "Not yet, my father, not yet, for you must live to do the deeds which I would have done, had I not to die so young. When I am gone, father, leave in peace the great host which follows me. But send not my body with them; place me in a stately tomb, and set at my head a high pillar, which passing horsemen may see a great way off and say: 'There lies Zohrab, the mighty Rustum's son, whom his great father slew, not knowing who he was!'"

Rustum replied in mournful tones: "As you have said, Zohrab, my son, so shall it be." Then Zohrab smiled upon his father, and his spirit passed away, leaving the smile upon his lips. And Rustum, in silent sorrow, drew his horseman's cloak over his face and sat on the sand by his dead son.

Night came on, and the two hosts moved towards their tents, to take their evening meal. Lights twinkled through the river mists, and a busy hum came from the crowded camps. And in the midst of the solitary waste of sand, great Rustum and his son were left alone.

From the "Shah-Namah," or Book of Kings.

The ENCHANTED HORSE



MANY ages ago, there lived a rich and powerful sultan, who had a passion for all rare inventions and contrivances. Therefore many ingenious artists would repair to his court to entertain the monarch with their productions, knowing well that they would be bountifully and liberally rewarded. On one occasion, a Hindu appeared before the throne with a horse of ebony, richly caparisoned, and so naturally imitated that at first sight it was taken for a living animal.

"Sire," said the Hindu to the sultan, "I recommend my horse to your Majesty's examination as wonderful, for whenever I mount it, I can transport myself to the most distant part of the world in a very short time."

"If you speak the truth," replied the sultan, "then I

have never seen or heard of anything so marvellous, but I shall only believe your tale when I have made trial of that which you have brought."

Upon this, the sultan's son, the Prince Ferooz, heir-presumptive to the throne, advanced and said: "Father, I will mount the horse, and make a trial of it, and obtain proof of its use."

So the sultan replied: "Son, you shall try the horse as you desire, and you shall give me your opinion concerning its qualities."

The prince accordingly arose, and, mounting the horse, urged it on with his feet; but it moved not from its place. He therefore said mockingly to the Hindu: "Where is the rapidity of pace of which you boasted?"

On hearing this, the Hindu approached and showed him a wooden peg just at the base of the horse's neck, saying: "Turn this peg, O prince, and the horse will at once ascend into the air."

Ferooz turned the peg, and lo! the horse moved and soared with him into the air, where it flew away with such amazing swiftness, that in a few moments he was out of sight of the people. Long did the sultan and his court await the return of the prince, and when he came not, the monarch began to suspect that his son was exposed to great danger. He called the Hindu to him and said to him passionately: "If the prince comes to any harm, your head shall answer for it."

"Sire," replied the Hindu, "there is good reason to hope that no misfortune will come to him. When he finds himself at a loss, he is sure to discover a second peg, which, if turned, will cause the horse to descend

to the ground, where it can be led with ease by the bridle."

"Be that as it may," replied the sultan, "I cannot depend upon the assurance you give me." He then ordered his officers to bind the Hindu and to keep him close prisoner until the return of the prince.

Meanwhile Ferooz was carried through the air at a prodigious pace, and in less than an hour's time he had ascended to such a height, that he could no longer distinguish anything on the earth, but mountains and plains seemed confounded together. Then he began to think of returning, but turn the peg as he might, he could not stop the flight of the horse. He immediately realised his grave danger, but this did not deprive him of his reason. He diligently examined the horse's head and neck, and at length perceived, on the right shoulder, a second peg smaller than the first. This peg he at once turned, and the horse began to descend with as great swiftness as it had risen.

Night had fallen when the prince reached the ground once more, but there was sufficient light for him to perceive that the horse had alighted upon the terrace of a magnificent palace, surrounded by high battlements. Ferooz quietly dismounted, and, groping about, he at length discovered a door which led to a staircase, by which he descended to the lower part of the building. Here he found a court of marble, and he wondered at the beauty of this palace, but was most surprised that he could hear no sound, nor the voice of any inhabitant.

He paused in perplexity, and looked to the right and left, not knowing whither to go. Just at that moment,

he beheld a light in a small apartment which opened from the court, and passing between silken curtains, he entered a magnificently furnished room, in which he saw a beautiful lady asleep, whose splendid attire proclaimed her to be of rank equal to his own.

Ferooz fell upon his knees, and taking the lady's sleeve, pulled it gently, whereupon she awoke, greatly surprised to find a handsome young man kneeling at her side. The prince availed himself of this favourable moment to plead for assistance and protection, telling the lady his rank, and narrating to her his extraordinary adventures.

The personage to whom Ferooz addressed himself was the Princess of Bengal, eldest daughter of the Rajah of that country, who had built this palace at some distance from his capital so that she might enjoy the country air. After she had heard all that the prince had to say, she replied: "Prince, you are not in a barbarous country. Hospitality and kindness are to be found in Bengal as well as in your own land. Since good fortune has brought you to my palace, I hope that you will remain here as my guest."

Prince Ferooz was only too happy to comply with the wishes of so charming a princess, who, for her part, directed her thoughts towards rendering his stay agreeable by all the amusements she could devise. Nothing went on but concerts of music, accompanied by magnificent banquets in the palace gardens, or hunting parties in the neighbouring country, which abounded with all kinds of game—stags, hinds and fallow-deer, and the beasts peculiar to the kingdom of Bengal.

Thus several weeks passed pleasantly away, during which time Ferooz and his princess became very dear to each other. At length the prince declared that he could remain no longer. "I must return to my father's court," said he; "but as life cannot be pleasant to me when absent from so lovely a princess, I ask the favour of taking you along with me to be my bride."

The princess consented, so early one morning, when all the attendants were still asleep, Ferooz mounted upon his ebony horse, and taking the princess up behind him, he turned the peg, whereupon the horse rose into the air, and sped along so swiftly that in less than two hours they had arrived within sight of the capital of the sultan. Ferooz directed his course to a pleasure-house at some distance from the palace, where he left the princess, ordering that she should be provided with whatever she had occasion for.

Then he commanded a horse to be saddled, and rode off alone to inform the sultan of all that had happened. As he passed through the streets, he was greeted with acclamations by the people, and, on arriving at the palace, he was received with ecstasy by his father, who embraced him with tears of joy and tenderness. So glad was the sultan, that he commanded that the Hindu should be released from prison and sent out of the country, together with his horse. Then preparations were made for the entry of the princess into the palace, and a procession of state was made ready to conduct her thither with all the respect and honour due to her rank.

Now the Hindu, hearing what had happened from those who brought him out of prison, determined on



"The horse rose into the air."

revenge. Without losing any time, he went to the pleasure-house where the princess was lodged, and informed her that he had been sent in the sultan's name to bring her to the palace. The princess at once consented to accompany him, and the two mounted upon the ebony horse which was standing in the courtyard. Delighted at the ease with which he had accomplished his villainy, the Hindu turned the peg, and instantly the horse mounted into the air in full view of the sultan and his court, who at that moment arrived from the palace.

The mortification of the sultan at so signal a piece of insolence and treachery was the greater because it was not in his power to punish the affront, but he called loudly to the Hindu to descend and deliver up the princess. The Hindu, quite unmoved by his cries, continued on his way, and governed his enchanted steed so well that he arrived early next morning in a wood near the capital of the kingdom of Kashmir.

The Princess of Bengal, who knew now that she was in the power of an enemy whose violence she dreaded, thought of escaping from him and seeking out some sanctuary. No sooner were they come to earth, than she began to call out as loudly as she could for help and succour, and her shrieks and cries attracted the attention of a company of horsemen, who happened to be the King of Kashmir and his attendants returning from the chase.

The king addressed himself to the Hindu, demanding to know who he was, and what relation the lady was to him. "She is my wife," said the Hindu insolently,

"and what right has any one to interfere between her and me?"

"My lord," cried the princess, "give no credit to this impostor. He is a wicked magician, who has carried me away by force and stratagem on the enchanted horse which you behold there."

She had no occasion to say more to persuade the king that what she told him was the truth; and, greatly enraged at the insolence of the Hindu, he ordered his guards to surround the villain and strike off his head, a sentence which was immediately carried out.

The joy of the princess was inexpressible at finding herself delivered from the power of the Hindu, but she soon discovered that she had fallen into another persecution no less afflicting. No sooner had they arrived at the palace of the King of Kashmir, than her deliverer informed her that he had resolved to marry her himself on the very next day, whether she wished it or not, a declaration which put her into such agitation that she fainted away.

On recovering her senses, she resolved to feign madness in order that she might not break the promise she had made to Prince Ferooz, by consenting to marry the King of Kashmir. So she began to utter the most extravagant expressions before the king, and even approached him as if to attack him, causing him to be greatly alarmed that he had made his proposal so unseasonably.

The king sent for all the physicians of his court, and bade them find a cure for the princess, but the latter refused to see them, well knowing that, if she did, he

pretence would be found out. When any of them ventured to approach her, she fell into such a well-dissembled rage that one and all fled from her in fear. Then the king called in the most celebrated and experienced physicians of his kingdom, but they met with no better reception than the others. Afterwards, he dispatched messengers far and wide through the world, promising magnificent rewards to any man who could effect a cure; but though physicians arrived from all parts, none could boast of any better success than their predecessors.

Let us now return to Prince Ferooz, who, as may be imagined, was in great affliction on seeing the Hindu flying away with the princess of Bengal, to whom he was so greatly attached. Overcome with grief, he assumed the habit of a holy dervish, and roamed over the world in search of his promised bride, making diligent inquiry after her at every town and village to which he came.

It so happened that, in his travels, he arrived at the capital of the kingdom of Kashmir, where he heard all the people talking of a princess of Bengal, who had become mad on the day of her nuptials with the king. Considering that there could exist no other princess of Bengal than she for whom he was seeking, he disguised himself as a physician and went to the palace, where he undertook to attempt the cure of the princess, stipulating, however, that he must see her in private.

The sultan agreed to his conditions, and ordered that he should be taken to the chamber of the princess. As soon as the latter saw him, she pretended to fly into a passion, threatening him; but Ferooz said in a low



voice : "Princess, I am no physician, but your promised husband, and I have come to set you at liberty."

The joy and surprise of the princess on hearing these words were too great to be described, and she eagerly inquired of the prince how he came there in the garb of a physician. Ferooz then informed her as briefly as possible of his adventures, and then heard from the princess how she had been delivered from the Hindu by the King of Kashmir, who forthwith had declared his design of marrying her without even asking her consent.

"That design shall never be carried out," said the prince. "Have no fear. I will take good measures to deliver you from the tyranny of this king."

So saying, he departed, and going to the king, said

to him : "Your Majesty, the visit which I have paid to the princess has suggested to me a means of curing her unhappy malady. Did she not arrive in your kingdom upon a horse which was enchanted?"

"She did," replied the king, overjoyed at his words; "and the horse is even now in my treasury, where it is kept as a great curiosity, though, in truth, I know not the use of it."

"Then, sire," said the pretended physician, "as the princess was brought hither on an enchanted horse, it is certain that it is the enchantment which has taken possession of her, and this can be dissipated only by means of the horse itself, together with a certain powder of which I have knowledge. Let the horse, therefore, be brought into the palace square to-morrow, and let the princess also be conducted thither, richly attired, and I promise you that, within a few moments, I will restore her completely both in body and in mind."

The king gladly undertook to do all that was required, and early next morning, the horse was taken out of the treasury and placed in the great square. There a great concourse of people gathered together to witness the restoration of the princess, and the king and his ministers of state took up a position on a dais which had been erected for that purpose. Then the princess of Bengal was assisted into the saddle of the horse, and, all being ready, Ferooz advanced towards the enchanted animal and placed around it twelve braziers of lighted charcoal, into which he cast a strongly-perfumed powder.

At once a thick dark cloud arose from the braziers, which so enveloped the princess that neither she nor the

horse could be seen ; whereupon the pretended physician leapt nimbly up behind her, and turning the peg in the neck of the horse, caused it to rise with them into the air. Just as the enchanted steed was about to set off on its homeward journey, the prince cried out : "When next, O king, you would marry a princess who implores your assistance, learn first to ask for her consent."

The same day, Ferooz alighted with his princess in his father's capital, where his safe return aroused the greatest excitement and enthusiasm. The sultan rejoiced exceedingly to behold once more his son and the princess of Bengal, and ordered that the marriage should be solemnised as soon as the necessary arrangements could be made to render the ceremony as magnificent and imposing as possible.

Then his first care was to dispatch an ambassador to the Rajah of Bengal, to inform that monarch of what had occurred, to seek his approval of the marriage, and to propose to him an alliance between their two countries as a wedding contract. This the Rajah of Bengal regarded as an honour, and accepted with the greatest pleasure and satisfaction.

From the "Arabian Nights."





PERHAPS there are no people in the world who are such enthusiastic admirers of literature as the Arabs. Their princes and other great men of the past have generally been famous for highly respecting and liberally rewarding men of literature, especially poets. A thousand pieces of gold were often given, and sometimes ten, twenty, or thirty thousand, and even more, for a few verses; nay, for a single couplet.

A whimsical story is told of a king who denied to poets those rewards to which usage had almost given them a claim. This king, whose name is not recorded, had the faculty of retaining in his memory any ode, after having only once heard it; and he had a memlook¹ who could repeat an ode that he had twice heard, and a

¹ A male slave.

female slave who could repeat one that she had heard thrice.

Whenever a poet came to compliment him with a flattering ode, the king used to promise him that if he found his verses to be his original composition, he would give him a sum of money equal in weight to what they were written upon. The poet, consenting, would recite his ode; and the king would say: "It is not new, for I have known it some years," and would repeat it as he had heard it.

After which he would add: "And this memlook also retains it in his memory," and would order the memlook to repeat it; which, having heard it twice, from the poet and the king, he would do. The king would then say to the poet: "I have also a female slave who can repeat it"; and on his ordering her to do so, she would repeat what she had thus thrice heard. So the poet would go away empty-handed.

The famous poet El Asma'ee, having heard of this proceeding, and guessing the trick, determined upon outwitting the king; and accordingly composed an ode made up of very difficult words. But this was not his only preparatory measure, another will presently be explained, and a third was to assume the dress of a Bedawee,¹ that he might not be known, covering his face, the eyes only excepted, with a piece of cloth, in accordance with a custom of Arabs of the desert.

Thus disguised, he went to the palace, and having asked permission, entered, and saluted the king, who

A Bedouin of the desert.

said to him : "Whence art thou, O brother of the Arabs, and what dost thou desire?"

The poet answered : "May God increase the power of the king! I am a poet of such a tribe, and have composed an ode in praise of our Lord the Sultan."

"O brother of the Arabs," said the king, "hast thou heard of our condition?"

"No," answered the poet; "and what is it, O king of the age?"

"It is," replied the king, "that if the ode be not thine, we give thee no reward; and if it be thine, we give thee the weight in money of what it is written upon."

"How," said El Asma'ee, "should I assume to myself that which belongs to another, and knowing, too, that lying before kings is one of the basest of actions? But I agree to this condition, O sultan."

So he repeated his ode. The king, perplexed, and unable to remember any of it, made a sign to the memlook, but he had retained nothing; and called to the female slave, but she also was unable to repeat a word.

"O brother of the Arabs," said he, "thou hast spoken truth, and the ode is thine without doubt; I have never heard it before. Produce, therefore, what it is written upon, and we will give thee its weight in money, as we have promised."

"Wilt thou," said the poet, "send one of the attendants to carry it?"

"To carry what?" asked the king; "is it not upon a paper here in thy possession?"

"No, O lord the sultan," replied the poet; "at the

time I composed it, I could not procure a piece of paper upon which to write it, and could find nothing but a fragment of a marble column left me by my father; so I engraved it upon this, and it lies in the court of the palace."

He had brought it, wrapped up, on the back of a camel. The king, to fulfil his promise, was obliged to exhaust his treasury; and to prevent a repetition of this trick (of which he afterwards discovered El Asma'ee to have been the author), in future rewarded the poets according to the usual custom of kings.

From Halbet el-Kumeyt. Translated by E. W. Lane.





THE · DESERT · ISLAND

THERE was once a certain wealthy man, whose only son was saved from drowning by a humble slave. His gratitude for this was unbounded, and desiring to do all he could in return, he gave the slave his freedom, and presented him with a well-found vessel laden with rich merchandise.

“Go,” said he, “cross the seas and dispose of these goods in other lands. What you receive for them shall be your own.”

The slave was greatly pleased, and, bidding farewell to his master, he sailed away in his vessel upon the broad ocean. But before he had been long upon his voyage, a great storm arose, and his ship was cast upon a rock and broken to pieces. Every soul on board was

drowned, save only the slave, who saved his life by swimming to an island which he had observed close by.

Overcome with grief at the loss of his property, he cast himself upon the sandy shore and gave way to his despair. At length, however, he arose, and set off through a beautiful forest which fringed the beach, and which stretched inland for some distance. Emerging from the shadow of the trees, he found himself on a broad plain, in the midst of which stood a splendid city; and he saw that many people were pouring out of its gates.

When the people saw him, they hastened towards him, shouting joyously: "Welcome! welcome! Long live the king!" Then to his amazement, they brought a rich carriage, and placing him in it, escorted him to a magnificent palace, where many servants gathered about him, clothing him in garments of royal purple, addressing him as their king, and expressing their obedience to his will.

The slave was dazzled and bewildered, and believed that he was dreaming, and that all he saw, heard and experienced was the creation of his suffering brain. Becoming convinced, however, that he was awake and in full possession of his senses, he said to some of those who stood about him: "How is this? I cannot understand it. Why should you thus elevate and honour a man whom you do not know, a poor penniless wanderer whom you have never seen before? That you should make such a man your ruler causes me more wonder than I can express."

"Sire," replied one of those who ministered to him, "this island is inhabited by spirits with the outward

forms of men. Long since, they prayed that a son of man should be sent each year to rule over them, and their prayer was answered. Yearly a son of man is sent, whom they receive with honour and place upon the throne. But his dignity and power end with the year, and at its close, he is placed on board a ship and carried to a vast and desolate island, where, unless he has prepared for this day, he is obliged to end his life in misery and solitude. Then a new king is sent hither, and so year follows year."

"Tell me," said the slave, "what manner of kings have you had in the past?"

"The kings who preceded you," replied the man, "were all careless and indifferent, enjoying their power to the full, and thinking not of the day when it should end. May you be wiser than they; let my words find rest within your heart."

The newly-made king listened with great attention to all this, and felt grieved that he should have lost even the time he had already missed for making preparations for the loss of his wealth and power.

He sent for the wisest man in his court, and said to him: "Advise me, O spirit of wisdom, how I may prepare for the evil days which await me."

"Penniless you came to us, and penniless you will be sent to the desolate island of which you have been told," replied the wise man. "At present you are our king, and may do whatever is pleasing to you. Send therefore skilled workmen to this island. Let them build houses, cultivate the soil, and beautify the surroundings. The barren plains will be changed into fruitful

fields, people will journey there to live, and you will have established a new kingdom for yourself, with subjects to welcome you joyously when you have lost your power here. The year is short, the work is long; therefore be earnest and energetic."

The king did everything as the wise man had advised him. He sent skilled workmen and rich materials to the desolate island, and before the close of his year of power, it had become a delightful and attractive abode. The monarchs who had gone before him had regarded the day of their power's close with fear and dread, and had smothered all thoughts of it in revelry. But he looked forward to it as a day of joy, when he should enter into a life of permanent peace and felicity.

At last the day came, and the slave who had been made king was deprived of his brief authority. His royal garments were stripped from him, and he was clothed with the rags in which he had been cast upon that shore. Thus humbly attired, he was placed upon a ship, the sails of which were set for the island which was henceforth to be his abode.

When he approached its shores, however, the people whom he had sent there gathered to greet him with music, song and great rejoicing. With glad cries they led him to the palace which had been prepared for him, set amidst glorious gardens where the scent of flowers and the splash of fountains delighted the senses. Here he reigned, a prince among his people, and here he lived ever after in happiness and peace.

From The Talmud.



THE PUNISHMENT OF CRÆSUS

CRÆSUS, the king of Lydia,¹ made himself lord of many nations, and amassed so great a store of riches that he became the wealthiest monarch in the world. In his pride he boasted himself to be the happiest of men, but this was displeasing to the gods, who, to humble him, inflicted upon him a dreadful punishment.

First he dreamt a dream in the night, that his beloved son Atys would die by the blow of an iron weapon. When he awoke, he was greatly alarmed at the dream, and instantly made his son take a wife, and whereas in former years the youth had been wont to command the Lydian forces in the field, he would not now suffer him to accompany them.

Now it chanced that, while he was making arrangements for the wedding, there came to Sardis a man under a misfortune, who had upon him the stain of blood. He was by race a Phrygian, and belonged to

¹ An ancient kingdom in Asia Minor

the family of the king. Presenting himself at the palace of Cræsus, he prayed to be admitted to purification, according to the custom of the country. Cræsus granted the request, and said to the suppliant: "Who art thou, stranger, and from what part of Phrygia didst thou flee to take refuge at my hearth? And whom, moreover, hast thou slain?"

"O king," replied the Phrygian, "I am the son of Gordias, son of Midas, and am named Adrastus. The man I unintentionally slew was my own brother. For this my father drove me from the land, and I lost all that I possessed. Then I fled here to thee."

"Thou art the offspring," replied Cræsus, "of a house friendly to mine, and thou art come among friends. Thou shalt want for nothing so long as thou abidest in my dominions. Bear thy misfortune as easily as thou mayest, so will it go best with thee."

Thenceforth Adrastus lived in the palace of the king.

It chanced that at this very same time, there was in the Mysian Olympus a huge monster of a boar, which went forth often from this mountain country, and wasted the cornfields of the Mysians. Many a time had the Mysians collected to hunt the beast, but instead of doing him any hurt, they came off always with some loss to themselves. At length they sent ambassadors to Cræsus, who delivered their message to him in these words: "O king, a mighty monster of a boar has appeared in our parts, and destroys the labour of our hands. We do our best to take him, but in vain. Now therefore we beseech thee to let thy son accompany us

back, with some chosen youths and hounds, that we may rid our country of the animal."

Crœsus thought at once of his dream, and answered: "Say no more of my son going with you; that may not be in any wise, for he is but just joined in wedlock. I will grant you a picked band of Lydians, and all my huntsmen and hounds; and I will charge those whom I send to use all zeal in aiding you to rid your country of the brute."

With this reply the Mysians were content; but the king's son, hearing what the prayer of the Mysians was, came in suddenly, and on the refusal of Crœsus to let him go with them, thus addressed his father: "Formerly, my father, it was deemed the noblest and most suitable thing for me to frequent the wars and hunting-parties, and win for myself glory in them; but now thou keepest me away from both, although thou hast never beheld in me either cowardice or lack of spirit. Either, therefore, let me go to the chase of this boar, or give me a reason why it is best for me to do according to thy wishes."

Then Crœsus answered: "My son, it is not because I have seen in thee either cowardice or aught else which has displeased me that I keep thee back; but because a vision, which came before me in a dream, warned me that thou wert doomed to die young, pierced by an iron weapon. Fain would I keep watch over thee, if by any means I may cheat fate of thee during my lifetime."

"Ah! father," replied the youth, "I blame thee not for keeping watch over me after a dream so terrible. But thy dream foretold that I should die stricken by

an iron weapon. What hands has a boar to strike with? What iron weapon does he wield? Here we do not combat men, but a wild animal. I pray thee, therefore, let me go with these Mysians."

"There thou hast me, my son," said Cræsus; "thy interpretation is better than mine. I yield to it, and change my mind, and consent to let thee go."

Then the king sent for Adrastus, the Phrygian, and commanded that he should accompany his son on the hunting-party, in order to watch over him, if perchance he should be attacked upon the road by some band of daring robbers.

"I will do as thou wishest," replied Adrastus, "though I would rather have kept away from this hunt, for I have no heart to it. Thou shalt receive thy son back safe and sound, so far as depends upon a guardian's carefulness."

Thus assured, Cræsus let them depart, accompanied by a band of picked youths, and well provided with dogs of chase. When they reached Olympus, they scattered in quest of the boar. He was soon found, and the hunters, drawing round him in a circle, hurled their weapons at him. Then Adrastus also hurled his spear at the boar, but missed his aim and struck Atys. Thus was the son of Cræsus slain by the point of an iron weapon, and the warning of the vision was fulfilled.

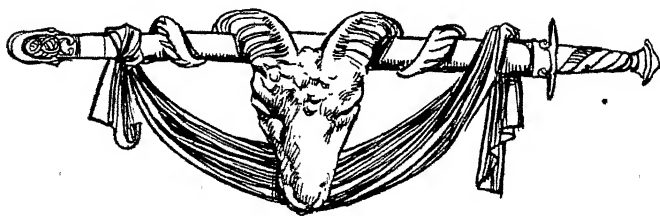
Then one ran to Sardis to bear the tidings to the king, and he came and informed him of the combat, and of the fate that had befallen his son. If it was a heavy blow to the father to learn that his child was

dead, it yet more strongly affected him to think that the very man whom he himself had sheltered had done the deed. Presently the Lydians arrived, bearing the body of the youth, and behind them followed the man who had slain him. He took his stand before the bier, and stretching out his hand to Croesus, begged that he would sacrifice him upon the body of his son.

"My former misfortune was burden enough," said he; "now that I have added to it a second, and have brought ruin on the man who gave me shelter, I cannot bear to live."

Croesus, when he heard these words, was moved with pity towards Adrastus, notwithstanding the bitterness of his own calamity. So he answered: "Enough, my friend. It is not thou who hast injured me, except so far as thou hast unwittingly dealt the blow. Some god is the author of my misfortune, and I was forewarned of it a long time ago."

Croesus, after this, buried the body of his son with such honours as befitted the occasion. Adrastus, the son of Gordias, regarding himself as the most unfortunate wretch whom he had ever known, so soon as all was quiet about the place, slew himself upon the tomb. Croesus, bereft of his son, gave himself up to mourning for two full years.





IN the days of old, a certain king named Æson reigned in the city of Iolchos by the sea. His people were called the Minuai, and they were a rich and powerful race. Yet the king was unhappy, for he was overcome by his lawless step-brother Pelias, and was driven, an exile, from the kingdom.

Now the king had a little son named Jason, whom he took with him when he was forced to flee. Fearing lest Pelias should kill the boy, Æson led him up into the mountains until he came to the mouth of a lonely cave, at the foot of a mighty cliff.

This was the home of Chiron, an ancient centaur and

the wisest of all things beneath the sky. Down to the waist Chiron was a man, but below he was a noble horse. He had snowy locks and beard, and his eyes were mild, and full of wisdom. To his care Jason was entrusted, and from the good centaur the boy learnt all that a hero ought to know.

After ten years had come and gone, and Jason had grown to be a mighty man, Chiron called the lad to him, and told him the story of his birth. "The time is now come," said he, "for you to return to your native land, and to win back the kingdom of which you are the rightful heir. But you have many a danger to go through before you rule in Iolchos by the sea; many a danger and many a woe; and strange troubles in strange lands, such as man never saw before."

Nothing daunted, Jason set off and at last arrived at the palace of Pelias, the king. The latter, upon learning his name and rank, pretended to be glad to see the youth, and spoke to him so lovingly, and feasted him so well, that Jason's anger against him began to pass away.

As they sat, Pelias began to talk of a certain Golden Fleece which hung upon a tree in the distant land of Colchis, and was guarded night and day by a dragon. Everyone knew of the Golden Fleece, and it was looked upon as an impossibility for any mortal to win it.

Pelias sighed heavily again and again, and at last said: "I fear, nephew, that you will find this a sad kingdom, and its ruler a miserable man. It has been foretold that the king of Iolchos shall never know peace and happiness until the Golden Fleece is brought to him."

"I will fetch it for you," cried Jason, "for this is a

labour which will bring me much glory. Promise me but this in return. Give me up this kingdom for my own on the day that I bring back the Golden Fleece."

This Pelias promised, for the task which he had craftily contrived that Jason should undertake was so dangerous, that the king thought there was no chance that the youth would ever return.

Then Jason gathered around him a chosen band of heroes and princes, all of whom were famed throughout the world for their deeds of daring. Amongst them was Argus, the builder of ships, with whose help they made a stout galley, the first long-ship which ever sailed the seas. They pierced her for fifty oars, an oar for each hero of the crew, and pitched her with coal-black pitch, and named her *Argo*, after the man who planned her. From this name the heroes were called the Argonauts.

They stored the vessel with food and water, and settled each man to his oar, while one of their number, Orpheus, the prince of minstrels, made sweet music upon his harp. Thus they rowed away across the bay towards the south, while the people lined the cliffs; and the women wept, while the men shouted at the starting of that gallant crew.

II. JASON AND MEDEA, THE WITCH-MAIDEN

After many strange adventures, the Argonauts came at length to the shores of Colchis, the land of the Golden Fleece, and ran their vessel up the dark stream of Phasis, until they saw before them the golden roofs of the king's city. When the king heard of their arrival, he bade his servants bring his chariot, that he might go down to the



river-side and behold the strangers with his own eyes. So he went down in his golden chariot, his daughter Medea, the witch-maiden, and her sister Chalciope by his side, and behind him a crowd of servants and soldiers, for he was a rich and mighty prince.

As he drove down by the reedy river, he saw the *Argo* sliding up beneath the bank, and many a hero in her, like Immortals for beauty and for strength, as their weapons glittered round them in the level morning sunlight, through the white mist of the stream.

And when they came near together and looked into each other's eyes, the heroes were awed before the king as he shone in his chariot: for his robes were of rich

gold tissue, and the rays of his diadem flashed fire; and in his hand he bore a jewelled sceptre, which glittered like the stars; and sternly he looked at them under his brows, and sternly he spoke and loud—

“Who are you, and what want you here, that you come to these shores? Do you take no account of my rule, nor of my people the Colchians who serve me, who never tired yet in battle, and know well how to face an invader?”

The heroes sat silent awhile before the face of that ancient king. But the goddess Hera put courage into Jason's heart, and he rose and shouted loudly in answer: “We are no pirates nor lawless men. We come not to plunder and to ravage, or carry away slaves from your land; but my uncle, Pelias the Minuan king, he it is who has set me on a quest to bring home the Golden Fleece. And these too, my bold comrades, they are no nameless men, but heroes far renowned. We, too, never tire in battle, and know well how to give blows and to take: yet we wish to be guests at your table: it will be better so for both.”

Then the king's rage rushed up like a whirlwind, and his eyes flashed fire as he heard; but he crushed his anger down in his breast, and spoke mildly a cunning speech—

“If you will fight for the Fleece with my Colchians, then many a man must die. But do you indeed expect to win from me the Fleece in fight? So few you are, that if you be worsted I can load your ship with your corpses. But if you will be ruled by me, you will find it better far to choose the best man among you, and let

him fulfil the labours which I demand. Then I will give him the Golden Fleece for a prize and a glory to you all."

So saying, he turned his horses and drove back in silence to the town. And the Argonauts sat silent with sorrow, and longed for Hercules and his strength; for there was no facing the thousands of the Colchians and the fearful chance of war.

Now Medea, the king's daughter, pitied the heroes, and Jason most of all; and she said to her sister: "Our father is stern and terrible, and who can win the Golden Fleece?"

And her sister answered: "These men are not like our men; there is nothing which they cannot dare nor do."

Medea thought of Jason and his brave countenance, and said: "If there was one among them who knew no fear, I could show him how to win the Fleece."

So in the dusk of evening, they went down to the river-side, Medea, the witch-maiden, and her sister Chalciope. There they saw Jason, who kept ward on shore, leaning upon his lance, and full of thought. Then Medea cried: "Go home, O Minuan, before you die!"

But Jason answered: "It would be base to go home now, fair princess, and to have sailed all these seas in vain." Then both the princesses besought him; but Jason said, "It is too late."

"You know not," said Medea, "what he must do who would win the Fleece. He must tame the two brazen-footed bulls, who breathe devouring flame; and with

them he must plough ere nightfall four acres in the field of Ares, the War-god; and he must sow them with serpents' teeth, of which each tooth springs up into an armed man. Then he must fight with all those warriors; and little will it profit him to conquer them, for the Fleece is guarded by a serpent more huge than any mountain pine; and over his body you must step if you would reach the Golden Fleece."

Jāson laughed bitterly. "Unjustly is that Fleece kept there, and by an unjust and lawless king; and unjustly shall I die in my youth, for I will attempt it ere another sun be set."

Then Medea trembled and said: "No mortal man can reach that Fleece unless I guide him through. For round it, beyond the river, is a wall full nine ells high, with lofty towers and buttresses, and mighty gates of threefold brass; and over the gates the wall is arched, with golden battlements above. And over the gateway sits Brimo, the wild witch-huntress of the woods, brandishing a pine-torch in her hands, while her mad hounds howl around. No man dare meet her or look on her, but only I her priestess, and she watches far and wide lest any stranger should come near."

"No wall so high," said Jason, "but it may be climbed at last, and no wood so thick but it may be crawled through; no serpent so wary but he may be charmed, or witch-queen so fierce but spells may soothe her; and I may yet win the Golden Fleece, if a wise maiden help bold men."

And he looked at Medea cunningly, and held her with his glittering eye, till she blushed and trembled, and

said : "Who can face the fire of the bulls' breath, and fight ten thousand armed men ?"

"He whom you help," said Jason, flattering her, "for your fame is spread over all the earth. Are you not the queen of all enchantresses, wiser even than your sister Circe, in her fairy island in the West ?"

"Would that I were with my sister Circe in her fairy island in the West, far away from sore temptation and thoughts which tear the heart ! But if it must be so—for why should you die ?—I have an ointment here ; I made it from the magic ice-flower, above the clouds on Caucasus, in the dreary fields of snow. Anoint yourself with that, and you shall have in you seven men's strength ; and anoint your shield with it, and neither fire nor sword can harm you. But what you begin, you must end before sunset, for its virtue lasts only one day. And anoint your helmet with it before you sow the serpents' teeth ; and when the sons of earth spring up, cast your helmet among their ranks, and the deadly crop of the War-god's field will mow itself and perish."

Then Jason fell on his knees before her, and thanked her and kissed her hands ; and she gave him the vase of ointment, and fled trembling through the reeds. And Jason told his comrades what had happened, and showed them the box of ointment ; and all rejoiced.

III. THE BRAZEN BULLS

At sunrise Jason went and bathed, and anointed himself from head to foot, and his shield, and his helmet, and his weapons, and bade his comrades try the spell.

So they tried to bend his lance, but it stood like an iron bar. Then they hurled their lances at his shield, but the spear-points turned like lead; and one hero tried to throw him, but he never stirred a foot; another struck him with his fist a blow which would have killed an ox, but Jason only smiled, and the heroes danced about him with delight; and he leapt and ran and shouted in the joy of that enormous strength, till the sun rose, and it was time to go and claim the king's promise.

So he sent up two of his companions to tell the king that he was ready for the fight; and they went up among the marble walls and beneath the roofs of gold, and stood in the king's hall, while he grew pale with rage.

"Fulfil your promise to us, O king," they cried. "Give us the serpents' teeth, and let loose the fiery bulls; for we have found a champion among us who can win the Golden Fleece."

The king bit his lips, for he fancied that they had fled away by night; but he could not go back from his promise, so he gave them the serpents' teeth. Then he called for his chariot and his horses, and sent heralds through all the town; and all the people went out with him to the dreadful War-god's field.

There the king sat upon his throne, with his warriors on each hand, thousands and tens of thousands, clothed from head to foot in steel chain-mail. And the people and the women crowded to every window and bank and wall; while the Argonauts stood together, a mere handful in the midst of that great host. And Medea was there, wrapped closely in her veil; but the king did not



“Both the bulls were tamed and yoked; and Jason bound them to the plough.”

know that she was muttering cunning spells between her lips.

Then Jason cried : "Fulfil your promise, and let your fiery bulls come forth."

The king bade open the gates, and the magic bulls leapt out. Their brazen hoofs rang upon the ground, and their nostrils sent out sheets of flame, as they rushed with lowered heads upon Jason; but he did not flinch a step. The flame of their breath swept round him, but it singed not a hair of his head; and the bulls stopped short and trembled when Medea began her spell.

Then Jason sprang upon the nearest and seized him by the horns; and up and down they wrestled, till the bull fell grovelling on his knees; for the heart of the brute died within him, and his mighty limbs were loosed, beneath the steadfast eye of that dark witch-maiden and the magic whisper of her lips.

So both the bulls were tamed and yoked; and Jason bound them to the plough, and goaded them onward with his lance till he had ploughed the sacred field.

All the heroes shouted; but the king bit his lips with rage, for the half of Jason's work was over, and the sun was yet high in heaven.

Then he took the serpents' teeth and sowed them, and waited what would befall. But Medea looked at him and at his helmet, lest he should forget the lesson she had taught.

Every furrow heaved and bubbled, and out of every clod arose a man. Out of the earth they rose by thousands, each clad from head to foot in steel, and drew

their swords and rushed on Jason, where he stood in the midst alone.

Then the heroes grew pale with fear for him; but the king laughed a bitter laugh. "See! if I had not warriors enough already round me, I could call them out of the bosom of the earth."

But Jason snatched off his helmet, and hurled it into the thickest of the throng. And blind madness came upon them, suspicion, hate, and fear; and one cried to his fellow: "Thou didst strike me!" and another: "Thou art Jason; thou shalt die!"

So the fury seized those earth-born phantoms, and each turned his hand against the rest; and they fought and were never weary, till they all lay dead upon the ground, and the kind earth took them home into her breast; and the grass grew up all green again above them, and Jason's work was done.

Then the Argonauts rose and shouted, till the crags rang with the sound. And Jason cried: "Lead me to the Fleece this moment, before the sun goes down."

But the king thought: "He has conquered the bulls, and sown and reaped the deadly crop. Who is this that is proof against all magic? He may kill the serpent yet." So he delayed, and sat taking counsel with his princes till the sun went down and all was dark. Then he bade a herald cry: "Every man to his home for to-night. To-morrow we will meet these heroes, and speak about the Golden Fleece."

Then he turned and looked at Medea. "This is your doing, false witch-maid! You have helped these yellow-

haired strangers, and brought shame upon your father and yourself."

Medea shrank and trembled, and her face grew pale with fear; and the king knew that she was guilty, and whispered: "If they win the Fleece, you die!"

IV. HOW JASON TOOK THE GOLDEN FLEECE

The Minuans marched towards their ship, growling like lions cheated of their prey; for they saw that the king meant to mock them and to cheat them out of all their toil. And one of them said: "Let us go to the grove together, and take the Fleece by force." Another cried: "Let us draw lots who shall go in first; for, while the serpent is devouring one, the rest can slay him and carry off the Fleece in peace."

But Jason held them back, though he praised them; for he hoped for Medea's help. And after a while Medea came trembling, and wept a long while before she spoke. At last she said: "My end is come, and I must die; for my father has found out that I have helped you. You he would kill if he dared; but he will not harm you, because you have been his guests. Go, then, go; remember poor Medea when you are far away across the sea."

But all the heroes cried: "If you die, we die with you; for without you, we cannot win the Fleece, and home we will not go without it, but fall here fighting to the last man."

"You need not die," said Jason. "Flee home with us across the sea. Show us first how to win the Fleece; for

you can do it. Why else are you the priestess of the grove? Show us but how to win the Fleece, and come with us, and you shall be my queen, and rule over rich princes in Iolchos by the sea." And all the heroes pressed round, and vowed to her that she should be their queen.

Medea wept and shuddered, and hid her face in her hands; for her heart yearned after her sisters and her play-fellows, and the home where she was brought up as a child.

But at last she looked up at Jason, and spoke between her sobs: "Must I leave my home and my people, to wander with strangers across the sea? The lot is cast, and I must endure it. I will show you how to win the Golden Fleece. Bring up your ship to the wood-side, and moor her there against the bank; and let Jason come up at midnight, and one brave comrade with him, and meet me beneath the wall."

Then all the heroes cried together, "I will go!" "And I!" "And I!"

But Medea calmed them, and said: "Orpheus shall go with Jason, and bring his magic harp; for I hear of him that he is the king of all minstrels, and can charm all things on earth."

Orpheus laughed for joy, and clapped his hands, because the choice had fallen on him; for in those days poets and singers were as bold warriors as the best.

So at midnight they went up the bank, and found Medea, and beside her ran a yearling lamb.

Then Medea brought them to a thicket beside the

War-god's gate. There she bade Jason dig a ditch, and kill the lamb, and leave it there, and strew on it magic herbs and honey from the honeycomb.

Then sprang up through the earth, with the red fire flashing before her, Brimo the wild witch-huntress, while her mad hounds howled around. She had one head like a horse's, and another like a ravening hound's, and another like a hissing snake's, and a sword in either hand. And she leapt into the ditch with her hounds, and they ate their fill, while Jason and Orpheus trembled, and Medea hid her eyes.

At last the witch-queen vanished, and fled with her hounds into the woods; and the bars of the gates fell down, and the brazen doors flew wide, and Medea and the heroes ran forward and hurried through the poison wood, among the dark stems of the mighty beeches, guided by the gleam of the Golden Fleece, until they saw it hanging on one vast tree in the midst.

Jason would have sprung to seize it; but Medea held him back, and pointed, shuddering, to the tree-foot, where the mighty serpent lay, coiled in and out among the roots, with a body like a mountain pine. His coils stretched many a fathom, spangled with bronze and gold; and half of him they could see, but no more, for the rest lay in the darkness far beyond.

When he saw them coming, he lifted up his head and watched them with his small bright eyes, and flashed his forkèd tongue, and roared like the fire among the woodlands, till the forest tossed and groaned. For his cries shook the trees from leaf to root, and swept over the long reaches of the river, and over the king's hall,

and woke the sleepers in the city, till mothers clasped their children in their fear.

But Medea called gently to him, and he stretched out his long spotted neck, and licked her hand, and looked up in her face, as if to ask for food. Then she made a sign to Orpheus, and he began his magic song.

As he sang, the forest grew calm again, and the leaves on every tree hung still; and the serpent's head sank down, and his brazen coils grew limp, and his glittering eyes closed lazily, till he breathed as gently as a child, while Orpheus called to pleasant Slumber, who gives peace to men, and beasts, and waves.

Then Jason leapt forward warily, and stepped across that mighty snake, and tore the Fleece from off the tree-trunk; and the three rushed down the garden, to the bank where the *Argo* lay.

There was a silence for a moment, while Jason held the Golden Fleece on high. Then he cried: "Go now, good *Argo*, swift and steady, if ever you would see home again."

And she went, as the heroes drove her, grim and silent all, with muffled oars, till the pine-wood bent like willow in their hands, and stout *Argo* groaned beneath their strokes.

On and on, beneath the dewy blackness, they fled swiftly down the swirling stream; underneath black walls, and temples, and the castles of the princes of the East; past sluice-mouths, and fragrant gardens, and groves of all strange fruits; past marshes where fat kine lay sleeping, and long beds of whispering reeds; till they

heard the merry music of the surge upon the bar, as it tumbled in the moonlight all alone.

Into the surge they rushed, and *Argo* leapt the breakers like a horse; for she knew the time was come to show her mettle, and win honour for the heroes and herself.

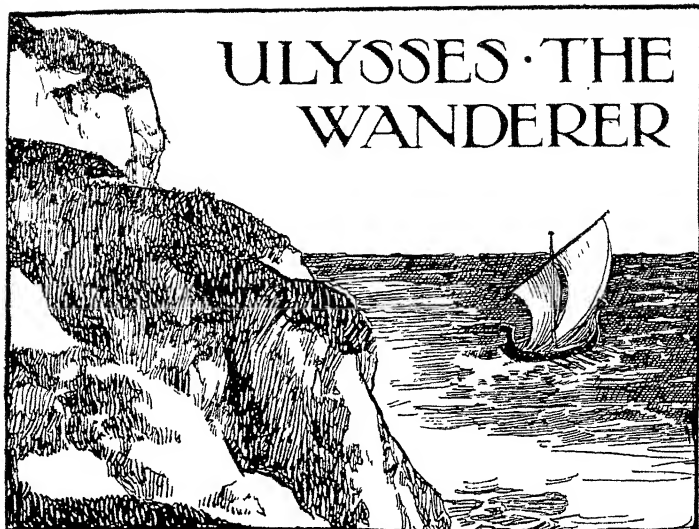
Into the surge they rushed, till the heroes stopped, all panting, each man upon his oar, as she slid into the still broad sea.

Then Orpheus took his harp and sang a pæan, till the heroes' hearts rose high again; and they rowed on stoutly and steadfastly, away into the darkness of the West.

So they fled away in haste to the westward, but many weary years passed by, before they came at last to Iolchos. Many were the adventures which befell them ere they looked again upon the fair Minuan land, and the roof-trees of the parents who mourned them as lost. Then Jason wedded Medea, the witch-maiden, and won his kingdom from Pelias, his uncle, and, until misfortunes at last overtook him, reigned over the rich princes in Iolchos by the sea.

From various Classical Sources. Told by Charles Kingsley.





INTRODUCTION

THE heroes, who sailed with Jason, left behind them valiant sons, but not so great as they had been. Yet their fame, too, lives to this day, for they fought at the ten years' siege of Troy, a famous city of Asia. Their story was first written down, about three thousand years ago, by the Greek poet Homer, in two of the noblest songs on earth—the "Iliad," which tells us of the siege of Troy, and the "Odyssey," which tells the wanderings of Odysseus, or Ulysses, on his way home from the great war.

Ulysses was king of the rocky isle of Ithaca. He was one of the bravest of the Greek princes who fought at the siege of Troy, and after the destruction of that city he became inflamed with the desire of seeing again, after

ten years' absence, his faithful wife Penelope and his island home.

So he set sail with his fleet from Troy, but before long contrary winds cast him from the right track, and many misfortunes prevented him from resuming it. For ten whole years he wandered before he reached Ithaca, and in the course of his wanderings his fleet was destroyed, his men were all killed or drowned, and he himself was shipwrecked, his life being saved by a wonderful girdle brought to him by a goddess in the shape of a sea-bird.

The land upon which he was at length cast was called Phœacia, and its king, Alcinous, was seized with admiration to behold one of those heroes who had fought at Troy. He took great delight to hear of all the adventures which had befallen Ulysses, and gladly supplied him with a well-manned ship which conveyed him to his rocky island home. Thus Ulysses returned at last to his wife Penelope and his son Telemachus, and great was their happiness after being separated from each other for twenty long years.

The following tale narrates some of his adventures on the disastrous voyage home from Troy.

I. THE KINGDOM OF THE WINDS

They crowded sail, and beat the old sea, and forth they went with a forward gale, till they came to the isle where Æolus reigned, who is god of the winds. Here Ulysses and his men were courteously received by the monarch, who showed him his twelve children which have rule over the twelve winds. A month they stayed

and feasted with him, and at the end of the month he dismissed them with many presents, and gave to Ulysses at parting an ox's hide, in which were enclosed all the winds; only he left abroad the western wind to play upon their sails, and waft them gently home to Ithaca.

This bag, bound in a glittering silver band so close that no breath could escape, Ulysses hung up at the mast. His companions did not know its contents, but guessed that the monarch had given to him some treasure of gold or silver. Nine days they sailed smoothly, favoured by the western wind, and by the tenth they approached so nigh as to discern lights kindled on the shores of their native land; when, by ill-fortune, Ulysses, overcome with fatigue of watching the helm, fell asleep.

The mariners seized the opportunity, and one of them said to the rest: "A fine time has this leader of ours; wherever he goes he is sure of presents, when we come away empty-handed; and see what King Æolus has given him, store, no doubt, of gold and silver."

A word was enough to those covetous wretches, who, quick as thought, untied the bag, and instead of gold, out rushed with mighty noise all the winds. Ulysses with the noise awoke and saw their mistake, but too late, for the ship was driving with all the winds back far from Ithaca, far as to the island of Æolus from which they had parted, and in sight of home too! Up he flew amazed, and raving, doubted whether he should not fling himself into the sea for grief of his bitter disappointment.

At last he hid himself under the hatches for shame. And scarce could he be prevailed upon, when he was



"THEY MET A DAMSEL, OF STATURE SURPASSING HUMAN, WHO WAS
COMING TO DRAW WATER."

[See p. 87]

told he was arrived again in the harbour of King Æolus, to go himself or send to that monarch for a second succour; so much the disgrace of having misused his roval bounty (though it was the crime of his followers and not his own) weighed upon him.

When at last he went, and took a herald with him, and came where the god sat on his throne feasting with his children, he would not thrust in among them at their meat, but set himself down like one unworthy in the threshold. Indignation seized Æolus to behold him in that manner returned, and he said: "Ulysses, what has brought you back? Are you so soon tired of your country, or did not our present please you? We thought we had given you a kingly passport."

Ulysses made answer: "My men have done this ill-mischief to me: they did it while I slept."

"Wretch," said Æolus, "avaunt, and quit our shores: it fits not us to convoy men whom the gods hate and wish to destroy."

Forth they sailed, but with far different hopes than when they left the same harbour the first time with all the winds confined, and only the west wind suffered to play upon their sails to waft them in gentle murmurs to Ithaca.

They were now the sport of every gale that blew, and despaired of ever seeing home more. Now those covetous mariners were cured of their desire for gold, and would not have touched it if it had lain in untold heaps before them.

II. THE LAND OF THE GIANTS

Six days and nights they drove along, and on the seventh day they put into Lamos, a port of the Læstrygonians. So spacious this harbour was, that it held with ease all their fleet, which rode at anchor safe from any storms, all but the ship in which Ulysses was embarked.

He, as if prophetic of the mischance which followed, kept still without the harbour, making fast his bark to a rock at the land's point, which he climbed with purpose to survey the country. He saw a city with smoke ascending from the roofs, but neither ploughs going, nor oxen yoked, nor any sign of agricultural works.

Making choice of two men, he sent them to the city to explore what sort of inhabitants dwelt there. His messengers had not gone far before they met a damsel, of stature surpassing human, who was coming to draw water from a spring. They asked her who dwelt in that land. She made no reply, but led them in silence to her father's palace.

He was a monarch named Antiphas. He and all his people were giants. When they entered the palace, a woman, the mother of the damsel, but far taller than she, rushed abroad and called for Antiphas. He came, and snatching up one of the two men, made as if he would devour him. The other fled. Antiphas raised a mighty shout, and instantly, this way and that, multitudes of gigantic people issued out at the gates, and making for the harbour, tore up huge pieces of rock and flung them at the ships which lay there, all which they utterly overwhelmed and sank.

Ulysses, with his single bark that had never entered the harbour, escaped; that bark which was now the only vessel left of all the gallant navy that had set sail with him from Troy. He pushed off from the shore, cheering the sad remnant of his men, whom horror at the sight of their countrymen's fate had almost turned to marble.

III. THE HOUSE OF CIRCE

On went the single ship till it came to the island of *Æea*, where *Circe*, the dreadful daughter of the Sun, dwelt. She was deeply skilled in magic, a haughty beauty, and had hair like the sun.

Here a dispute arose among Ulysses' men which of them should go ashore and explore the country; for there was a necessity that some should go to procure water and provisions, their stock of both being nigh spent; but their hearts failed them when they called to mind the fate of their fellows, which moved them so tenderly that they wept.

But tears never yet supplied any man's wants; this Ulysses knew full well, and dividing his men (all that were left) into two companies, at the head of one of which was himself, and at the head of the other *Eurylochus*, a man of tried courage, he cast lots which of them should go up into the country, and the lot fell upon *Eurylochus* and his company, two-and-twenty in number.

They took their leave, with tears, of Ulysses and his men that stayed, whose eyes wore the same wet badges of weak humanity, for they surely thought never to see these, their companions, again, but that on every coast



where they should come, they should find nothing but savages and cannibals.

Eurylochus and his party proceeded up the country, till in a dale they descried the house of Circe, built of bright stone, by the road's side. Before her gate lay many beasts, such as wolves, lions, and leopards, which by her art she had rendered tame.

These arose when they saw strangers, and ramped upon their hinder paws, and fawned upon Eurylochus and his men, who dreaded the effects of such monstrous kindness; and staying at the gate, they heard the enchantress within, sitting at her loom, singing such strains as suspended all mortal faculties. Strains so

ravishingly sweet provoked even the sagest heads among the party to knock and call at the gate.

The shining gate the enchantress opened, and bade them come in and feast. They unwisely followed, all but Eurylochus, who stayed without the gate, suspicious that some trap was laid for them.

Being entered, she placed them in chairs of state, and set before them meal and honey and Smyrna wine; but mixed with baneful drugs of powerful enchantment. When they had eaten of these, and drunk of her cup, she touched them with her charming-rod, and straight they were transformed into swine, having the bodies of swine, the bristles, and snout, and grunting noise of that animal; only they still retained the minds of men, which made them the more lament their brutish transformation.

Having changed them, she shut them up in her sty with many more whom her wicked sorceries had formerly changed, and gave them swine's food to eat.

IV. ULYSSES AND MERCURY

Eurylochus, who beheld nothing of these sad changes from where he was stationed without the gate, only instead of his companions that entered (who, he thought, had all vanished by witchcraft) beheld a herd of swine, hurried back to the ship to give an account of what he had seen; but so frightened and perplexed that he could give no distinct report of anything, only he remembered a palace, and a woman singing at her work, and gates guarded by lions. But his companions, he said, were all vanished.

Then Ulysses, suspecting some foul witchcraft, snatched his sword and his bow, and commanded Eurylochus instantly to lead him to the place. But Eurylochus fell down and, embracing his knees, besought him, by the name of a man whom the gods had in their protection, not to expose his safety, and the safety of them all, to certain destruction.

"Do thou then stay, Eurylochus!" answered Ulysses; "eat thou and drink in the ship in safety, while I go alone upon this adventure; necessity, from whose law is no appeal, compels me."

So saying, he quitted the ship and went on shore, accompanied by none; none had the hardihood to offer to partake that perilous adventure with him, so much they dreaded the enchantments of the witch. Singly he pursued his journey, till he came to the shining gates which stood before her mansion; but when he essayed to put his foot over her threshold, he was suddenly stopped by the apparition of a young man, bearing a golden rod in his hand, who was the god Mercury.

He held Ulysses by the wrist to stay his entrance; and "Whither wouldst thou go?" he said. "O, thou most erring of the sons of men! Knowest thou not that this is the house of great Circe, where she keeps thy friends in a loathsome sty, changed from the fair forms of men into the detestable and ugly shapes of swine? Art thou prepared to share their fate, from which nothing can ransom thee?"

But neither his words nor his coming from heaven could stop the daring foot of Ulysses, whom compassion for the misfortune of his friends had rendered careless of

danger: which when the god perceived, he had pity to see valour so misplaced, and gave him the flower of the herb *moly*, which is sovereign against enchantments.

The *moly* is a small unsightly root, its virtues but little known, and in low estimation; the dull shepherd treads on it every day with his clouted shoes; but it bears a small white flower which is medicinal against charms, blights, mildews and damps.

"Take this in thy hand," said Mercury, "and with it boldly enter her gates. When she shall strike thee with her rod, thinking to change thee as she has changed thy friends, boldly rush in upon her with thy sword and extort from her the dreadful oath of the gods that she will use no enchantments against thee: then force her to restore thy abused companions."

He gave Ulysses the little white flower, and instructing him how to use it, vanished.

V. ULYSSES OVERCOMES CIRCE

When the god was departed, Ulysses with loud knockings beat at the gate of the palace. The shining gates were opened as before, and great Circe, with hospitable cheer, invited in her guest. She placed him on a throne with more distinction than she had used to his fellows, she mingled wine in a costly bowl, and he drank of it, mixed with those poisonous drugs.

When he had drunk, she struck him with her charming-rod, and "To your sty," she cried; "out, swine; mingle with your companions." But those powerful words were not proof against the preservative which

Mercury had given to Ulysses; he remained unchanged, and as the god had directed him, boldly charged the witch with his sword as if he meant to take her life.

When she saw this, and perceived that her charms were weak against the antidote which Ulysses bore about him, she cried out and bent her knees beneath his sword, and said, "Who or what manner of man art thou? Never drank any man before thee of this cup but he repented it in some brute's form. Thy shape remains unaltered as thy mind. Thou canst be none other than Ulysses, renowned above all the world for wisdom, whom the Fates have long since decreed that I must love. O Ithacan, a goddess woos thee."

"O Circe," he replied, "how canst thou treat of love or marriage with one whose friends thou hast turned into beasts? Thou must swear to me that thou wilt never attempt against me the treasons which thou hast practised upon my friends."

The enchantress, won by the terror of his threats, or by the love which she felt for him, swore by Styx, the great oath of the gods, that she meditated no injury to him. Then Ulysses made show of gentler treatment, which gave her hopes of inspiring him with a passion equal to that which she felt.

She called her handmaids, four that served her in chief, who were daughters to her silver fountains, to her sacred rivers, and to her consecrated woods,¹ to deck her apartments, to spread rich carpets, and set out her silver tables with dishes of the purest gold, and meat as

¹ Water-nymphs and wood-nymphs.

precious as that which the gods eat, to entertain her guest.

But the feast which Ulysses desired was to see his friends (the partners of his voyage) once more in the shapes of men; and the food which could give him nourishment must be taken in at his eyes. Because he missed this sight, he sat melancholy and thoughtful, and would taste of none of the rich delicacies placed before him.

When Circe noted this, she easily divined the cause of his sadness, and leaving the seat in which she sat throned, went to her sty and led abroad his men, who came in like swine and filled the ample hall, where Ulysses sat, with gruntings.

Hardly had he time to let his sad eye run over their altered forms and brutal transformation when, with an ointment which she smeared over them, suddenly their bristles fell off, and they started up in their own shapes, men as before. They knew their leader again, and clung about him with joy for their late restoration, and some shame for their late change; and wept so loud, blubbering out their joy in broken accents, that the palace was filled with a sound of pleasing mourning, and the witch herself, great Circe, was not unmoved at the sight.

To make her atonement complete she sent for the remnant of Ulysses' men who stayed behind at the ship, giving up their great commander for lost; who, when they came and saw him again alive, circled with their fellows, no expression can tell what joy they felt; they even cried out with rapture, and to have seen their frantic expressions of mirth a man might have supposed that

they were just in sight of their native earth, the cliffs of rocky Ithaca.

Only Eurylochus could hardly be persuaded to enter that palace of wonders, for he remembered with a kind of horror how his companions had vanished from his sight.

Then great Circe spake, and gave order that there should be no more sadness among them, nor remembering of past sufferings. For as yet they fared like men that are exiles from their country, and if a gleam of mirth shot among them, it was suddenly quenched with the thought of their helpless and homeless condition.

Her kind persuasions so wrought upon Ulysses and the rest, that they spent twelve months in all manner of delight with her in her palace. For Circe was a powerful magician, and could command the moon from her sphere, or unroot the solid oak from its place to make it dance for their diversion; and by the help of her illusions she could vary the taste of pleasures, and contrive delights, recreations and jolly pastimes to "fetch the day about from sun to sun, and rock the tedious year as in a delightful dream."

At length Ulysses awoke from the trance of the faculties into which her charms had thrown him, and the thought of home returned with tenfold vigour to goad and sting him; that home where he had left his virtuous wife Penelope and his young son Telemachus.

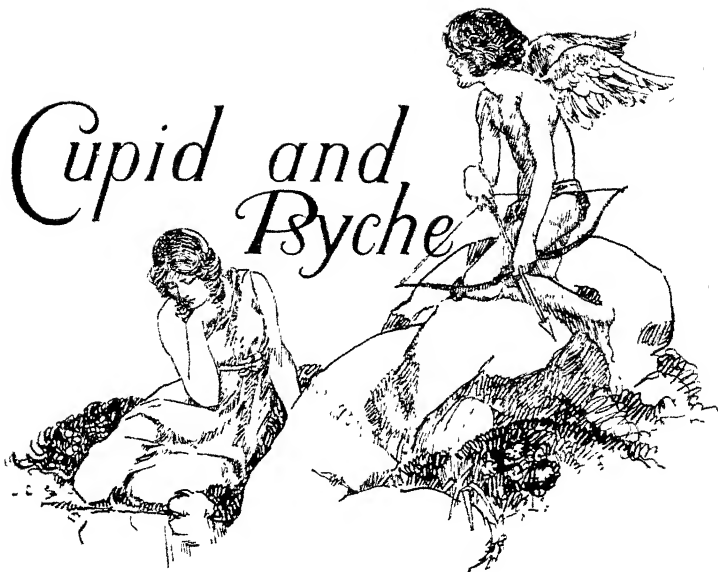
One day when Circe was in her kindest humour, he moved to her craftily, and as it were afar off, the question of his home-return, to which she answered: "O Ulysses,

it is not in my power to detain one whom the gods have destined for further trials."

Then she proceeded to relate to him some of the dangers which he must still face, before he should reach home again at last. But she consented to his departure, and the time being come, he and his companions set their sails and took a fresh leave of great Circe; who by her art calmed the heavens and gave them smooth seas, and a right forewind (the seamen's friend) to bear them on their way to Ithaca.

From Homer's "Odyssey." Told by Charles Lamb.





I. THE PALACE OF ENCHANTMENT

THERE was once a king of a certain city who had three daughters. They were all very beautiful, but Psyche, the youngest, was lovelier even than Venus. As she walked through the streets, the people bowed their heads before her and strewed her path with flowers. Strangers came from distant parts of the world to see her and to adore her.

THEREUPON Venus, the goddess of beauty, grew angry that a mortal should receive the honour that was due to her. She sent for her son Cupid, and showed him Psyche lying asleep in her father's palace. "Look," said she, "this is the maiden for whose sake my temples and shrines are now deserted. Avenge me. Touch her

with your arrow, and fill her heart with love for the ugliest and basest creature that lives on earth."

Cupid looked upon the maiden, and thought her fair indeed. He made no reply to Venus, but to himself he said: "It would ill befit me to do such a wrong to so beautiful a maid. From me and my arrows she is safe. I will never wed her to a vile and wretched monster." Then he and his mother vanished into the air.

Years passed by; Psyche's sisters were married, and the time came when the maiden herself should take a husband. The king, her father, summoned his councillors, and asked for their advice on this question, and they bade him journey to the city of Miletos, and there consult the oracle of Apollo. The king did so, and, to his horror and dismay, the oracle commanded him to array his daughter in bridal robes and set her upon a high mountain, so that she might be wedded to a dreadful monster.

When the king returned to the city with this news, his subjects were filled with grief and lamentation. "Is it for this," they cried, "that we have given to our princess the honour paid to a goddess?" But their tears were of no avail, and the day came when Psyche was to be led out to her doom.

Mournfully she was taken and placed upon the lonely peak which the oracle had indicated, and there abandoned to her fate. She fell upon her knees and bewailed her cruel lot, until, exhausted by her grief, she fell into a deep sleep.

As she slumbered upon the hard rocks, Cupid appeared and looked upon her with pitying eyes. In

the night he sent his servant Zephyr, who took the maiden in his arms and bore her away, still sleeping, to a far-distant palace.

When Psyche opened her eyes, the sun was streaming into her apartment. She found, to her amazement, that she was reposing upon a silken couch as soft as down, and looking around she beheld walls of snowy marble, and rich ornaments of ivory and gold. Through the columns at one end of the room she caught glimpses of a sunny garden, and could hear the distant murmur of fountains and the songs of birds.

"Where am I?" she cried in amazement; and a voice immediately answered her: "You are in your palace, lady, and all that it contains is yours. Command, and we, your handmaids, will obey."

Psyche asked for food, and the unseen hands placed before her baskets of delicious fruit and dishes of every kind. As she ate, the invisible spirits played for her delight the sweetest music. Then she walked in the garden, and plucked dewy roses from the heavily-laden bushes.

Thus the hours flew by, and the sun once again sank beneath the horizon. No sooner had the shades of night fallen than a voice richer than any she had yet heard said to her: "Psyche, this palace I have built for you, and you may do with it what you will."

Night after night the same voice came and wooed her tenderly, and though the person to whom it belonged always remained invisible, he was so gentle and kind that in the end she consented to become his wife.

Then he said to her: "Psyche, you are free to roam

about this palace and its gardens at your will, and I shall do all that I can to make you happy. But one thing you must not do, or you will bring ruin upon yourself and will cause me to leave you for ever—you must not attempt to see my face.”

Psyche promised that she would do her unseen husband's bidding, but she grieved at heart that she might never look upon him. He only came in the night-time, when all was dark; and in the daytime the maiden felt very lonely. At last she broke into open lamentations, and begged her husband to allow her sisters to come and stay with her.

“You shall have your wish,” he said, “but I fear evil will come of it.” On the morrow there came a sound of a rushing wind, and Zephyr appeared, bearing the two sisters of Psyche, who had thus been conveyed from their father's palace. They rejoiced indeed to see her, whom they regarded as lost, living so peacefully and happily in a magnificent palace, surrounded by so much wealth and splendour.

From room to room they wandered, admiring the treasures which the palace contained, and contrasting with it their own less beautiful abodes. Then envy began to arise in their hearts, and they grew jealous of their sister's wealth and happiness.

“You are indeed fortunate,” said the elder sister to her, “in having so splendid a residence. But where is the master? Are we not to see your husband?”

Then Psyche confessed that she had never yet seen him herself, and that he only came to her in the night-time when it was dark.

“Ah!” said her sister maliciously, “the reason for

this is very evident. The oracle, as you remember, commanded that you should be married to a monster. This is no doubt why he will not let you see his face."

When Zephyr had carried the sisters once again to their home, their words ate their way into Psyche's heart and grieved her sorely. That same night, when her husband was asleep, she resolved that she must know the truth at all costs, and, lighting a lamp, she held it over her husband's head.

There, stretched upon the cushions, she saw, not a dreadful monster, but the most beautiful of all the gods—Cupid himself. In her excitement, Psyche stumbled and let fall a drop of burning oil upon his right shoulder. At once he leaped up, spread out his wings, and fled away, crying: "Alas! alas! unhappy girl. Is this how you obey me? Instead of causing you to marry a monster, as my mother commanded me, I wedded you myself. And this is how you serve me. Farewell, Psyche! Farewell!"

Psyche cast herself down in an agony of despair, and upbraided herself for her folly in disobeying the only command her husband had ever given her. At length she rose to her feet, and determined to search for him throughout the world, and to take no rest until she had found him.

.II. THE SUFFERINGS OF PSYCHE

Meanwhile, Venus had discovered her son's deception, and cast him into prison, at the same time sending out her attendants to seek high and low for Psyche. "Bring hither with all speed," said the angry goddess,



"the presumptuous maiden who has ventured to cross my will. I shall know how to punish her."

So the attendants sought up and down the world, until they found Psyche pursuing her long and toilsome journey. They immediately seized her and dragged her by the hair to the court of Venus, treating her with every kind of indignity. When the goddess saw the girl, she mocked at her and said: "At length you are deemed worthy to salute the mother of your husband, who now lies wounded by your hands. Be of good cheer, for I will receive you with the kindness which you deserve."

Then, turning to her attendants, she cried: "Where are my handmaidens, Sorrow and Despair?" When these had been brought into her presence, she bade

them scourge Psyche with whips, and torment her with cruel words.

Then the unfortunate maiden was cast into a narrow stone cell, where every day new sufferings were heaped upon her. Venus imposed upon her the hardest and most humiliating labours, promising to beat her to death if she failed to accomplish them. But Psyche was so lovely and gentle, that every living creature wished to help and serve her, and thus she was enabled to complete all the tasks which were given to her.

On one occasion sacks of every kind of seed in the world were emptied into her cell, and when the contents were mixed together, she was ordered to separate them and place each in its proper sack before sunset. In this labour the ants helped her. They came in their thousands, and long before evening they had sorted out all the seeds.

Next she was commanded to climb a precipitous mountain, and to fill an urn with the water which sprang from a black rock at the summit. This spring was guarded by a dreadful serpent, which would certainly have slain her even if she had succeeded in reaching such an inaccessible spot. But an eagle came to her assistance, and, taking the urn in his powerful beak, succeeded in passing the serpent, and filled the vessel with the water of the spring.

Many other difficult and dangerous errands Venus found for the unhappy girl, but with the aid of birds and beasts all were successfully accomplished. Then the goddess, fearing lest Cupid should escape and rescue his wife, determined to set her a task which would surely prove her destruction.



"TO HIM SHE OFFERED ONE OF HER COPPER COINS." [See p 105]

She sent for the girl, and said: "Psyche, take this silver casket, and give it into the hand of Proserpine, Queen of the Underworld. Tell her that Venus bids her fill it with beauty."

Psyche was in despair at this. No mortal had ever passed through the gates of the Underworld and returned to the land of the living. She climbed a high tower, and was preparing to cast herself to the ground and die, when the very stones took pity upon her.

"Do not destroy yourself, lovely Psyche," they cried. "Have no fear; the task which has been set you is not impossible to accomplish. Not far from here is the noble state of Lacedæmon, near which stands the city of Tænarus. You must journey to this city, and there you will find a way to the Underworld. But go not empty-handed to the land of shades. Take with you two honey-cakes in your hands and two copper coins in your mouth, and you shall yet find your way into the presence of the dread Proserpine. But whatever you do, take care you speak no word to any one whom you may meet on the way, or you will never see the light of the sun again."

Psyche took heart at this, and set off for Tænarus, which is near Lacedæmon. Here she sought out the dark cavern which leads to the Underworld, and penetrated its depths, in spite of the terror inspired by the gloom which surrounded her. Soon she came to a rushing river of black water, and saw upon it a black boat with a shadowy ferryman, whose form and face were concealed by a dusky robe. To him she offered one of her copper coins, and in silence he rowed her across the stream.

On she went into the very depths of the earth, and she had nearly reached the palace of the queen, when a monstrous dog with three heads, the guardian of Proserpine's gates, sprang out upon her as if to devour her. But she cast to him one of her honey-cakes, and he allowed her to pass in safety.

Now Psyche entered Proserpine's dreadful halls, and perceived the Queen of the Underworld seated upon a black throne in a vast apartment, of which the roof and walls were lost in shadow. Overpowered by the silence and the gloom, Psyche would have fallen to the ground in terror, had not Cupid's voice suddenly sounded in her ear: "Be brave, dear wife, and all will be well." Comforted by these words and by the unseen presence of her husband, Psyche advanced to the throne and sank upon one knee.

"Why does a living mortal dare to enter Proserpine's hall?" said the queen in a voice of infinite sadness. The maiden, mindful of the advice which had been given to her, made no reply, but raised in silence the casket which she carried in her hands.

"Bring hither the casket," said Proserpine.

Psyche did as she was commanded, and the queen took from her hands the silver box, which she proceeded to fill; but the girl did not dare to raise her eyes, nor did she behold what was placed within the box.

"Now go," said Proserpine; and Psyche without delay quitted her presence and made her way towards the upper world. Yet her dangers were not yet ended. As she left the palace, the three-headed dog again sprang at her with gaping jaws, but she silenced him in the same manner as before, by casting to him a honey-cake.

Then she hastened onwards, and reached the black, rushing river. Here stood the silent ferryman, who, for her last copper coin, conveyed her to the farther bank of the stream. Now her heart was filled with joy, and she ran towards the mouth of the cavern, until she saw at length the bright light of day, and knew that she had reached again the beautiful, fresh green earth.

But, alas! no sooner was she freed from the terrors of the Underworld, than she remembered the gift of beauty which she thought the casket contained, and was filled with eagerness to look upon it. Her curiosity at last overcame her, and, seizing the lid of the silver box, she tore it open. The casket, however, contained no gift of beauty, for Proserpine had placed within it the deadly vapour of eternal sleep. This vapour poured from the box and overpowered the maiden in an instant, and she fell senseless to the ground.

Cupid, who had escaped from his prison, was keeping a watchful eye upon his wife. He descended from the heights, and, touching her with the point of his magic arrow, aroused her from her death-like slumber. Then, taking her in his arms, he spread out his wings and carried her to Olympus.

He and the lovely maiden pleaded for the forgiveness of the gods, which in the end was granted to them. Psyche was given a place amongst the immortals, and in high Olympus she and Cupid live in unending bliss, enjoying the felicity which they had gained after so much suffering and tribulation.

From Apuleius.



KING ATTILA swept out from the east with his host of wild Huns, and wherever he marched, there he was the conqueror, so that the hearts of men failed them when they learnt of his approach. At the head of his fierce hordes he advanced into the vine-clad Rhine-land, threatening to devastate the land of the Franks unless tribute were paid to him. The Frankish king was glad enough to buy peace, and gave to Attila much treasure, sending, as hostage for his good faith, his young nephew Alberich. His son, Gunther, he would not send, for he was but a babe in his mother's arms.

Then the Huns passed on like an irresistible sea into Burgundy, where King Herrich realised that he too

must purchase peace from the men whom he dared not fight. But Attila was not satisfied with gold alone, and so the Burgundian king was forced to send as hostage his little daughter Hildegund.

Farther to the south swept the victorious Huns, till they came to the rich realm of Aquitaine, where Alphonse was king. The latter was very disturbed at Attila's approach, and he said to himself: "It is useless for me to offer resistance, where the hosts of the Franks and the Burgundians made none. I, too, must be prepared to yield up my treasures and my son." This he did, though with bad grace; and Attila rode off with a great sum of red gold, and with young Walter, Alphonse's son, by his side.

The Hunnish conqueror, greatly pleased with his successes, now determined to return to his own land, taking with him the enormous treasures he had won, and the three young hostages who had been entrusted to him.

"I have had enough of toil and strife," said he; "I will hang up my sword, and spend the rest of my days in peace and tranquillity. Laughter shall echo in my halls, and songs shall be heard in place of the cries of war."

So Attila took his ease in his palace, and made much of his three little captives, whom he treated as if they were his children, having none of his own. Walter and Alberich grew up by his side, and came to love each other as dearly as brothers; and the fierce old warrior took great pleasure in teaching them to ride, to throw the spear and wield the broadsword. So skilled did they become under his care, that there were none who could

equal them in any manly sports. Hildegund was brought up in the apartments of Helche, the queen, where she grew into a tall and lovely maiden, and a general favourite with every person in the palace.

Meanwhile, the king of the Franks had died; and his son Gunther, having come to the throne, immediately threw off the Hunnish yoke, and refused to send any more tribute to Attila. Alberich found out what had happened, and, bidding farewell to his comrade Walter, he fled away on a swift horse; nor did he rest until he had reached the fair city of Worms, the capital of his cousin Gunther.

Attila was much grieved at Alberich's flight, not only because of his love for the youth, but also because, as he grew older, he hoped that his two hostages would carry on his wars for him. Queen Helche was even more disturbed, and she said to her husband: "Take heed lest you lose Walter as well as Alberich, for it is on him that we now rely to maintain our power, and to command our host. Marry him to one of the noblest of our maidens, so that he may remain true to us and to the land of his adoption."

Attila thought this advice good, and he sought out Walter and said to him: "Son, never has any man been so dear to me as you, for you have served me well and faithfully, and have not feared to risk your life in my cause. I should now like to bestow upon you a fitting reward. Look round this realm; it contains many fair maidens; choose the fairest for your bride, and you shall have such a dowry with her as only Attila can give."

Now Walter fully intended to follow Alberich's example at the first opportunity, for he longed to see again his father and his native land. Moreover, he had little liking for the Hunnish maidens, having vowed himself to Hildegund, whose slender beauty was much more attractive in his eyes.

So he answered: "I thank you, O king, for your kindly offer, but I do not yet desire to take a bride. I live for the delights of war and the chase, and I fear that if I were to take a wife I should be tempted to stay at home in idleness. Therefore, suffer me to remain unmarried, that I may devote myself to your service the more readily and gladly."

These words pleased the old king very much, and he troubled Walter no more concerning this matter; but the latter waited his time to make good his escape, and at last it came. He had just returned from a small border war, in which he had, as usual, been victorious, and a great feast was to be held for three days in his honour. After the first greetings were over, he took off his armour, and went to the bower of Hildegund, who received him with words of warm welcome.

"Listen, Hildegund," he said quickly. "For many weary years I have longed for my native land, and often I might have made my escape as Alberich has done; but I would not do so and leave you behind alone. An opportunity has now come for us both to flee, though the risk is great. Tell me, then, are you willing to come with me and be my bride in the home of my birth? Or will you betray my trust, and tell Queen Helche of my intentions? I place my fate in your hands."

"How can you think me so base as to betray you?" replied the maiden. "Are we not both strangers in a hostile land? With all my heart I consent to accompany you and to be your wife. Indeed, had you not taken me with you, I should have followed you alone, for I would sooner risk any death than live here without you."

"Your words rejoice my heart," cried Walter, taking both her hands in his. "Be ready for flight directly I give the signal. A feast is to be held in my honour for three days, during which the Huns will weary themselves with so much revelry that they will not notice our absence. When the right moment comes, I will give the word. Until then, make ready and be watchful. Farewell."

Then the great feast began, and for three days King Attila made merry with Queen Helche and all the great chieftains of the Huns. On the third evening, Walter went secretly to Hildegund and said: "When the banquet is ended to-night, we will make our attempt, for every one will be overcome with sleep. Then you must take Queen Helche's keys and slip into the king's treasure-house, where, in the seventh room, you will find all the tribute that your father and mine paid to the Huns many years ago. Fill two chests with the finest jewels and golden ornaments, and bring them down to the great gateway. There you will find me waiting for you with horses ready saddled and harnessed. We shall be far away before the Huns awake from their heavy slumbers."

So Hildegund went off to complete her preparations,



“‘Your words rejoice my heart,’ cried Walter, taking both her hands in his.”

while Walter went again to the banquet-hall. Loud was the laughter and loud the song, and merriest of all the revellers was Walter, who trolled out a hunting ditty with such animation that the Huns made the rafters ring again with their shouts of approval.

"A good song!" roared Attila, bringing his drinking-cup down with a mighty clash upon the board. "Sing it again, Walter."

"So I will, my lord," replied the youth, "but not to-night. That song is more fit for the open air than for the four walls of a castle hall. I will sing it again to-morrow, when I am on the open heath—and far away." He laughed as he spoke, but Attila did not understand his meaning.

Song followed song, and loud was the laughter and the clatter of the wine-cups; but at last sleep overcame the Huns, and, one by one, they sank to rest where they were. Then Walter crept away, and clad himself from head to foot in glittering steel, while from the stable he brought forth his great war-horse and two other steeds, one of which was a powerful animal fitted with a pack-saddle to carry the treasure-chests.

Then he hastened to the great gateway, where he saw Hildegund awaiting his coming in the bright moonlight. Quickly he lifted the maiden on to the back of her palfrey, while he secured the treasure-chests to the pack-saddle of the other horse. Then, mounting his charger, he took the road towards the leafy Rhine, and the two hostages of war were soon far from the court, which they were destined never again to see.

II. THE COMBAT IN THE GREENWOOD

Meanwhile, all was still in Attila's halls, and nothing disturbed the silence of the night, save the heavy snores of the sleeping Huns. Morning broke, fresh and clear, as the chieftains gradually awoke from their slumber. Then the flight of Walter and Hildegund was discovered, and also the disappearance of the treasure which they had taken with them.

Queen Helche wept bitterly at the news, for she loved the maiden as her own daughter; but Attila forgot his love for Walter, and his rage at the loss of his treasure was awful to behold. He rent his garments and beat his breast and roared to his warriors: "Bring me back this southern dog loaded with chains, and to his captors I will give a hundred bracelets of red gold."

Small parties of horsemen set out in all directions in pursuit of the fugitives, but the latter were by now far upon their way, and none of the Huns ever so much as set eyes upon them again. One party penetrated right into the Rhine-land, where they were captured by a troop of Frankish horsemen, and brought before King Gunther to be questioned concerning their intentions.

Alberich, their former hostage, was present at the examination of the prisoners, and he laughed loud when he heard what they had to say.

"Ho! ho!" he cried. "So my good comrade Walter has escaped from the old bear's den at last! And he is more fortunate than I, for he brings with him a fair bride and a rich dower."

"We will grant him his bride," said King Gunther, "but his dower shall be mine, for is not part of it the very tribute which my father was forced to yield up to Attila the Hun? So great a treasure must not be allowed to go out of our land again."

"To prevent it is easier said than done," replied Alberich, who did not wish to see his old friend wronged. "You little know the might of Walter's arm, and you may be sure that he will not give up his treasure as long as he has strength to defend it."

"Let us hear no more such words as these," cried Gunther impatiently. "I am no coward, cousin Alberich, to be turned aside from my purpose through fear of the strength of one man."

Then he ordered his war-horse to be saddled, summoned his twelve champion knights, and, with Alberich by his side, rode out in search of Walter and the treasure.

Meanwhile, Walter and Hildegund, on leaving the palace of Attila, had ridden hard until they reached the forests. In the depths of the woods they pursued their way, hoping that by avoiding the open country they would escape the numerous horsemen who would soon be searching for them. In this they succeeded well, for, as we have already seen, the Huns never saw any trace of them again. But the journey was very wearisome to Walter, who hardly dared to sleep, so much did he fear that he might be taken by surprise.

Travelling day after day, with little rest, they at length reached the wooded mountains in the neighbourhood of the Rhine, and there, as they were riding along

a rocky woodland path, Walter espied a cave with so narrow an entrance that one man could have defended it against an army. Its position was the more secure because it could only be approached by a steep, narrow path, on which there was not space for more than one man at a time.

When Walter saw this cave, he hailed it with delight, for his eyelids were so weighed down with lack of sleep that he felt he could no longer keep them open.

"Come, Hildegund," said he, "let us lead our horses within this cave, for in truth I can go no farther without sleep. Many a night I have kept watch and ward for you, now you shall keep watch for me."

"Watch and pray will I both," replied the maiden, and she turned her horse's head towards the narrow path leading to the cave. "I will watch for your safety, and pray for your deliverance from this adventure."

Then they took the treasure-chests from the back of the pack-horse, and carried them into the interior of their rocky retreat, where they next proceeded to tether their patient steeds. This being done, Walter took off his armour, and, lying full length on the ground, sank at once into a heavy slumber; while Hildegund seated herself at the entrance to the cave to watch for the approach of any possible enemies.

She sat thus in silence for many hours, while Walter slept on peacefully, regaining every moment more of his spent strength. At length the maiden saw in the distance the sheen of steel armour and the glint of spear-points.

"Awake!" she cried to Walter. "The Huns are upon us!"

Walter at once leapt to his feet like a giant refreshed, and having flung on his mail, he went to the entrance of the cave, where he could clearly see a party of horsemen approaching.

"These are no Huns, dear maiden," he cried. "They are Franks, for with them comes my old comrade Alberich, and, if I mistake not, that must be King Gunther by his side."

The little party of knights now reined up their chargers below the cave, and Walter cried out to Alberich: "Hail! old friend; this is a goodly sight to me, for many months have passed since I last saw your beloved face and form."

"Right glad am I to see you, too, good Walter," cried the Frankish knight, "and I wish that we met under happier circumstances."

"Why, do you seek war with me?" cried Walter, in surprise.

"Not I, indeed," replied Alberich; "but this my good cousin, King Gunther, will not permit you to pass through his lands without delivering up to him the treasure which you carry with you."

"Then let him come and take it," cried Walter angrily. "Yet, for the sake of this maiden who is with me, I offer him freely a shield full of jewelled goblets if he will grant us safe passage through his lands."

On hearing this, Alberich turned to Gunther and said: "If you are prudent you will accept his offer, for



otherwise you will gain nothing save hard knocks and strong blows."

But Gunther laughed him to scorn and replied: "Your heart is faint, cousin. I will make no bargain unless the whole of the treasure is given up to me."

"Then fight out the battle as you may," said Alberich, "but I will take no part in it." So saying, he tethered his horse to a tree, and ascended a neighbouring hillock, whence he could have a good view of the combat.

The fray now began, but as only one knight could approach the cave at a time, Gunther sent first his high steward Gamelo of Metz to do battle with the redoubtable Walter. The Frankish knight rode at his adver-

sary, hurling his spear, but Walter dexterously avoided it, and in return sent his javelin with such unerring aim that he pinned Gamelo's right hand to his shield. Next, Hildebrand, his nephew, advanced, swearing that he would avenge his uncle's defeat. But he fared still worse, for Walter struck him under the gorget with a well-aimed spear, and swept him lifeless from his horse.

He was followed by Wittich the Saxon, but him Walter slew with a great stroke of his sword. One by one, the twelve champions of the Franks engaged with the mighty Walter, and one by one they fell, slain or wounded, before his irresistible blows. At last only King Gunther and Alberich remained, and the latter wept to see so many of his countrymen slain; yet such was his love for his old comrade, that he did not draw his sword in their defence.

III. THE AMBUSH

When the last of the Frankish champions had fallen, Alberich came down from his hillock and cried to Gunther: "Are you now satisfied, O king, that my advice to you was good? You have sent your brave knights to their death, and have gained nought thereby. The treasure is still in Walter's keeping, and you have lost the best of your champions."

"It is true, cousin," replied the king sadly; "I was indeed foolish not to listen to you; but I can see from your tears that you are moved by the overthrow of so many of your comrades. Will you not take up arms

against their conqueror, and aid me to avenge their death?"

"I little thought," replied Alberich, "that I should ever be asked to fight against my good friend Walter of Aquitaine, but I cannot refuse your appeal, and I will obey your will in this matter. Still, it would be useless to strive with Walter while he has his back to yonder cave, for there he could successfully repel the attacks of the whole of your Frankish host. Let us rather depart as if we had abandoned the quest. Then he will go upon his way, and we can lay an ambush for him in some place where he cannot so easily defend himself."

"Your counsel is good, Alberich," replied the king, "and you shall have no complaint that I do not follow it."

Then they tended the wounded, and placing them upon their horses, took them to a distant part of the forest, where their hurts could be carefully washed and dressed.

As they departed, the moon rose above the tree-tops, and Walter peered out from his rocky fortress to see if any more enemies lurked in the dim recesses of the woods; but, satisfied that he was left in peace, he retired into the cave and cast himself down to sleep again. Hildegund resumed her place at the mouth of the cavern to guard her hero through the silent watches of the night, and, as she sat, she sang a low song of triumph, telling the glorious deeds of the day.

With the first grey light of dawn, Walter and the maiden set off again on their way, for the knight wished to gain the realms of his father Alphonse with all possible

speed. Soon they quitted the leafy shade of the forest and emerged upon an open plain, broken here and there by clumps of trees. As they passed one of these thickets, two horsemen in full armour charged out upon them, and Walter recognised the forms of King Gunther and Alberich.

Quickly he sent Hildegund back with the horse on which the treasure-chests were slung, and prepared himself for battle. The two Franks made at him furiously, with lances at rest; but he cleverly avoided them, and, as they passed, he struck the king a blow upon the helmet which brought him headlong to the ground. Having unhorsed Gunther, Walter leapt from his charger, while Alberich did the same, and the king being unhurt, all three drew their swords and made ready to resume the combat.

Then said Walter to Alberich: "How is it that you have joined the ranks of my enemies, you whom I thought my most faithful friend? Had any man told me that Alberich would raise a sword in anger against me, I would have smitten him to the ground. Now I could weep for sorrow, for there you stand, an armed enemy, ready to rob and slay me. Is it wealth that you seek? Tell me, and I will gladly give you half my treasure to prevent this unhappy combat."

"You wrong me, Walter," replied Alberich; "I want none of your wealth. Grieved am I indeed to take up arms against you, but I do it for the sake of Gunther, my king, and for the sake of those knights, my good comrades, who lie slain in the forest. My duty to my country overcomes my duty to my friend."



"The strife began afresh."—See p. 124.

King Gunther grew impatient at this talk, and, to put an end to it, he rushed furiously at Walter, and the strife began afresh. For a long time the battle raged without any advantage being gained on either side; but at last Walter dealt a great stroke at the Frankish king, and his sword cut through the steel greave and bit deep into Gunther's leg.

Then he raised his weapon to give the death-blow to the fallen king, but Alberich warded it off, and, at the same time, disabled Walter's sword-arm with a sweeping stroke. The arm fell useless by his side, but, nothing daunted, Walter drew out his long Hunnish dagger with his left hand, and smote Alberich such a blow upon the head that his helmet was split in twain, and he fell senseless to the ground.

Now all three were disabled and sorely wounded, and the maiden Hildegund, seeing this, approached and bound up their hurts, washing them with the fresh water of a brook which flowed close at hand. Then said Walter: "Fill a goblet with water, Hildegund, and give Alberich to drink, for he is parched with thirst."

"Nay," said Alberich, "give it first to Walter, for he has fought like a hero this day, and shamed am I to have taken up arms against him."

Thus the old love between them was renewed, and even Gunther recognised that its power was in the end greater than that of loyalty to himself. When the time for parting came, Alberich said: "I may not go myself with you, for my place is by the side of my king; but I will send a band of trusty knights to guard you to your home."

Then Alberich rode off with King Gunther towards the city of Worms, while Walter and Hildegund continued on their homeward journey along the beautiful valley of the Rhine. On the next morning they were overtaken by the escort of knights which Alberich had promised, and so, without further adventure, they safely arrived in Aquitaine, bringing with them the great treasure.

Full of joy were King Alphar and Hilda his wife at the return of their beloved son, after so many years' exile in a distant land, and loud were their praises of Hildegund, his promised bride. Preparations were at once made for the wedding, and messengers were despatched to King Herrich of Burgundy to inform him of his daughter's escape from Attila's halls, and of her approaching marriage with Walter.

The wedding was celebrated soon afterwards with the greatest pomp and ceremony. King Herrich came from Burgundy with a magnificent retinue; King Gunther came from Worms; but the principal guest in Walter's eyes was his old comrade Alberich, who had fought by his side in a distant land, and had striven against him for the sake of his cousin Gunther, in his attempt to lay hands upon the treasures of Attila the Hun.

From the Monk Ekkehard's "Waltharius Manu Fortis."



THE LUCK OF EDENHALL



OF Edenhall the youthful Lord
Bids sound the festal trumpet's call;
He rises at the banquet board,
And cries, 'mid the drunken revellers all,
"Now bring me the Luck of Edenhall!"

The butler hears the words with pain,
The house's oldest seneschal
Takes slow from its silken cloth again
The drinking glass of crystal tall;
They call it the Luck of Edenhall.

Then said the Lord: "This glass to praise,
Fill with red wine from Portugal!"
The graybeard with trembling hand obeys;
A purple light shines over all,
It beams from the Luck of Edenhall.

Then speaks the Lord, and waves it light,
"This glass of flashing crystal tall
Gave to my sires the Fountain Sprite;
She wrote in it, *If this glass doth fall,*
Farewell then, O Luck of Edenhall!

"'Twas right a goblet the Fate should be
Of the joyous race of Edenhall!
Deep draughts drink we right willingly;
And willingly ring, with merry call,
Kling! klang! to the Luck of Edenhall!"

First rings it deep, and full, and mild,
Like to the song of a nightingale;
Then like the roar of a torrent wild;
Then mutters at last like the thunder's fall,
The glorious Luck of Edenhall.

"For its keeper takes a race of might,
The fragile goblet of crystal tall;
It has lasted longer than is right;
Kling! klang! with a harder blow than all
Will I try the Luck of Edenhall!"

As the goblet ringing flies apart,
Suddenly cracks the vaulted hall;
And through the rift the wild flames start;
The guests in dust are scattered all,
With the breaking Luck of Edenhall.

In storms the foe, with fire and sword;
He in the night had scaled the wall.
Slain by the sword lies the youthful Lord,
But holds in his hand the crystal tall,
The shattered Luck of Edenhall.

On the morrow the butler gropes alone,
The graybeard in the desert hall,
He seeks his Lord's burnt skeleton,
He seeks in the dismal ruin's fall
The shards of the Luck of Edenhall.

"The stone wall," saith he, "doth fall aside,
Down must the stately columns fall;
Glass is this earth's Luck and Pride;
In atoms shall fall this earthly ball,
One day like the Luck of Edenhall!"

*From the German of Uhland. Translated by
H. W. Longfellow.*



THE ADVENTURES · OF PRINCE HAGEN



I. THE GRIFFIN

THERE once reigned in Ireland a king named Sigeband, who won for himself great fame, as much for his wonderful strength and skill as for his kindness and generosity. His little son, Hagen, took after him, for though he was only ten years old, his strength was that of a grown man, and at hurling the spear, shooting with the bow, and other games of skill there was no boy in the country who could equal him.

One day King Sigeband held the midsummer feast at his castle of Balian, and many were the knights who came to tilt and tourney in honour of their fair ladies. After the jousting was over, the whole company repaired to the castle hall to listen to the songs of the minstrels, many of whom had come to compete for a great golden bowl which Sigeband had offered to the sweetest singer and harper in Ireland.

Meanwhile the boys amused themselves in the courtyard by hurling spears at a target, Hagen being always the winner. Suddenly the sky darkened as if a storm were approaching, and a sound was heard in the air like the rushing of a great wind. Looking upwards, the

boys saw, to their horror, a huge griffin sailing through the air. Nearer and nearer it came, and as it swooped down towards the castle, all the boys save Hagen fled in terror. He alone stood his ground, and manfully hurled his little spear at the advancing creature. The weapon hit its mark, but had no effect at all upon the griffin, which seized the boy in its talons and bore him off into the air.

The terrified cries of Hagen's companions alarmed the knights and ladies within the castle, and they came rushing out, just in time to see the griffin sailing over the sea with wonderful speed, bearing the young prince in its talons. Then all their merriment was turned to lamentation. The king was distracted, and cried in despair: "The half of my kingdom shall be his who restores my son to my arms." But there was no hope, for already the griffin was high up among the clouds, and almost lost to sight. King Sigeband and his queen locked themselves in their apartments and gave themselves up to grief, and many days passed by before the lords and ladies of the court looked upon their sorrowing faces again.

Meanwhile, the griffin carried Hagen over the sea to a rocky island far away, where it had its home. The boy looked down, and saw far beneath him a mass of rugged cliffs and pointed crags, separated by narrow, wooded valleys and pleasant glens. Before he had time to make a closer examination, the griffin swooped down to its nest on the summit of a lofty cliff, where it dropped its burden amongst its screaming young ones, and then set off in search of another prey.

• The young griffins thought the boy a dainty morsel indeed, and fell upon him greedily, with the intention of tearing him to pieces. Huge as they were, Hagen did not intend to be devoured without a struggle, and so fiercely did he attack the creatures, smiting at their beaks and gripping their throats, that he beat them back. But one of them, which was just old enough to fly, seized him by the belt and bore him off to a neighbouring tree, in order to make a meal of him alone.

• No tree could bear so great a weight, and the branches broke beneath the monster, so that it crashed through them with its prey. The griffin, badly bruised by the fall, dropped the boy and fluttered away to its nest; while Hagen, though sorely hurt, managed to drag himself to a deep cranny in a rock, where he remained hidden all day. When night fell, he crept out and made his way through bushes and bracken into a deep glen, in which a torrent boiled and bubbled. Here he curled himself under a low bush and fell fast asleep, utterly wearied by the exertions of the day.

When he awoke, the sun was high in the heavens, and to his surprise he saw a little girl of about his own age standing some way off, and staring at him in astonishment. He immediately leapt to his feet, upon which she fled away to some distance with the speed of a deer.

"Do not run away from me," the boy cried. "I will do you no harm. Do you see anything in me to cause you fear?"

"Yes, indeed," replied the girl. "I have seldom seen a more terrifying object, though in truth your voice has a pleasant sound. But you are covered with blood,

smear'd with dirt, and your clothes are hanging in shreds."

"That is through no fault of mine," replied Hagen, and he proceeded to tell her of his adventures, and of his fight with the young griffins.

The girl listened to his tale with many a shudder, and when he had finished she said: "Your words bring back to me anew my own story. I am Hilda, Princess of Saxony, and I, too, was carried to this island by the terrible griffin, though, for a reason which I do not know, it did not give me to its young ones, but placed me in a rocky cave, from which I soon escaped. Since then I have managed to hide myself from the monster, and have lived on the berries, roots and herbs which I find in the woods."

"A sad story indeed!" said the boy in pitying tones. "And have you been all alone since that day?"

"No," replied Hilda, "or I think that I should have died of fear. Two other girls have since suffered the same fate as I, and both of them escaped the monster's jaws just as I did. We live together in a cave not far from here, expecting each day to be captured and devoured."

"That shall never happen as long as I can protect you," cried the boy bravely. "Pray take me to your cave, for I am longing to see your two companions. Perhaps, also, you could give me some food, for I am almost famished with hunger."

"Foolish that I am not to have thought of it!" cried the girl. "Come with me at once, and you shall share our scanty fare."

• Hagen would not accompany her, however, until he had washed himself in the water of the torrent. When he had removed the mud from his clothes, and the blood and grime from his face and limbs, he followed the girl through a narrow path between two lofty walls of rock, and they at last emerged in a small valley as beautiful as a garden. A carpet of soft green grass lay underfoot, while shady trees and lofty ferns grew on all sides. Strange fruits of luscious appearance hung from the bushes, and the air was sweet with the scent of flowers. This lovely valley was enclosed on all sides by high cliffs, and the only entrance was by the narrow path which Hagen and his guide had followed.

The boy looked around him with pleasure and surprise, and saw, in the middle of the valley, two girls seated by the side of a rippling brook, formed by the water of a fall which splashed down the rock no great distance away. When the girls observed Hilda and her companion, they rose and ran towards them with cries of astonishment.

"Oh, Hilda," they cried, "where have you been, and who is this that you have brought with you?" And as they spoke, they leapt about the maiden in their excitement.

"Have patience," replied Hilda, laughing, "and I will tell you." Then she went on to inform her friends of her meeting with Hagen, and of his wonderful escape from the griffins. "And now," she concluded, "let me present you both to our new comrade." Turning to Hagen with a mock bow, she went on: "This is Hildburg of Thuringia, and this is Minna of Gothland. So, now

that we all know one another, let us take Hagen to the cave and give him some food, for he stands in sore need of it."

II. THE ISLAND

The girls conducted Hagen to a large cave at the end of the valley, where they set a dish of roots and herbs before him, and dressed his wounds as well as they could. There he stayed until he had recovered, the maidens tending him all the time with the greatest care. When his wounds were quite healed, he took upon himself the duty of procuring food, and, in search of prey, he ventured farther from the little valley than any of the girls had ever dared to do.

Hagen soon felt the need of weapons for his hunting expeditions, and at last, after many experiments, he succeeded in making a serviceable bow and some good arrows, and with these he shot down small animals of many kinds, the flesh of which made a pleasant addition to the larder, while their skins were used for clothes. Next he proceeded to make some fish-hooks, which he found an easier task. With a long line, made from the stretched tendons of animals, he would sit for hours fishing from the rocks, and he never returned to the little valley without a goodly string of glittering booty with him.

At first the girls were troubled as to how they could cook the fish, flesh and fowl which Hagen provided, for they had no means of making a fire. So the boy began to search for a way out of the difficulty, but it was some



time before he succeeded. One morning, however, he was sitting in a rocky valley pondering over the matter, and idly flinging stones at the face of a cliff, when suddenly sparks flew from the rock. He soon discovered the exact spot from which the flame issued, and before long he had made a splendid fire with the help of some dead wood. He carried pieces of the flaming wood back to the cave, and in a sheltered spot a fire was built up which was never allowed to go out. The girls soon became expert at cooking the food over the burning embers, and many a dainty dish they prepared from the provender which Hagen brought home.

Many years went by, and the four children found life

by no means unpleasant in their lovely valley, where the grass was always green and the flowers always bloomed. As for Hagen, the rough life of a hunter and fisherman just suited him, and he quickly grew from a boy into a youth, tall and straight and exceedingly strong. All this time the four young people saw no other living souls, and not so much as a sign of the griffins. At length, however, the young griffins began to fly about the island in search of food. Then the boy and his companions had to be more careful of their movements, and Hagen no longer dared to wander about as freely as he had done before.

One night, however, he ventured down to the shore, for a terrible storm was in progress, and he loved to watch the wild waves dashing themselves to foam upon the rocks; he loved to face the driving rain and to hear the storm-wind shrieking in his ears. As he stood there on a high pinnacle of rock, a great flash of lightning lit up the sea, and he caught sight of a noble ship making straight for the shore. He stared out into the darkness until the next flash came, and, alas! it showed him a dreadful scene, for the great vessel had driven upon a jagged point of rock, and was rapidly breaking to pieces. Through the roar of the tempest, he could just hear the shrieks of agony of the mariners, when the ship was swallowed up in the waves.

When day had come, the fury of the tempest was spent, and Hagen climbed down the cliffs to see if he could find any wreckage that might be useful. The rocks were strewn with pieces of driftwood, and in the middle of a sandy cove there lay the body of a knight,

clad in complete armour, with a sword belted to his waist, and a great bow and a quiver full of arrows lying by his side.

In spite of his sorrow at the loss of the ship's company, Hagen could scarcely repress a cry of delight at beholding weapons which, in the old days, he had learnt so well to use. Quickly he put on the knight's armour, laced on the helmet, girt the sword to his side, and picked up the bow and arrows. Nor was it long before he had an opportunity of using them, for just as he was about to depart with his newly found treasures, one of the griffins came hovering overhead, evidently in search of prey.

Without a moment's hesitation, Hagen drew his bow and let fly an arrow at the creature, but the weapon had little effect, sharp as was its point. The griffin then pounced down upon the boy, but the latter drew his sword, and, putting forth all his strength, he smote off the griffin's head. At that moment, the old griffin came sailing up with the rest of the brood, and all of them beset Hagen with such fury, that he was forced to retreat until his back was against the rocky cliffs. Here he could only be attacked from the front; and, feeling more secure, he brandished his sword with such wonderful force, that it shone around him like a circle of fire. The griffins shrieked with rage, and attacked him with beak and claw; but one by one he slew them, and before long they all lay dead upon the sand.

Then Hagen shouted aloud in his triumph, and ran as fast as he could to the cave, where his companions were anxiously awaiting his return. Great was their

surprise to behold their protector clad in steel armour, and with good weapons by his side, and greater still it was when they heard him cry: "You have no longer anything to fear, dear maidens, for I have slain the whole of our enemies."

"What are you saying?" asked Hilda in surprise. "Do you mean that you have slain all the griffins yourself, and without any assistance?"

"Come quickly and see for yourselves," cried the youth; and he hurried them to the place of his victory, where the dead griffins lay side by side upon the sand. Then the maidens were loud in their praises of their young hero, and all three took hands, and danced and sang for joy that their terrible enemies were no longer to be feared. They helped the youth to cast the bodies into the sea, and then built a mound of stones over the form of the knight, whose weapons had given Hagen the victory.

Now that the griffins were slain, the young islanders could issue from the confined limits of their little valley without any fear of being carried away to a dreadful death, and their life became full of joy and happiness. They began to explore all parts of their island, and many a glorious day they spent clambering over the rocky cliffs, or penetrating into the wooded recesses of the glens.

This free open-air life, with good food and drink in plenty, was not without its effect upon the maidens, and they grew strong and healthy and exceedingly beautiful. They learnt to make a kind of cloth from the fibres of a certain bush, and from this cloth they fashioned gar-

ADVENTURES OF PRINCE HAGEN 139

ments, with which they replaced their rough skins and furs.

Hagen grew stronger and stronger as the years went by. He practised unceasingly with his sword, and became so skilful in the use of his bow, that he could shoot a bird upon the wing or a fish in the water. Besides being the huntsman of the party, he became also the house-builder, for, not being satisfied with the dark and damp cave, in which there was now no necessity to live, he contrived comfortable huts for himself and his companions, neatly thatched with dry rushes, and secure against wind and weather.

III. THORSTEIN THE VIKING

Hagen and the three girls were very happy together, but although their life was pleasant enough, they longed to get back to the haunts of men, and often cast eager glances over the waves, hoping to see some signs of an approaching sail. But months and months went by, and no wandering ship came near those shores. At length, one breezy morning, Hilda was engaged in cooking the midday meal, while Hagen lay idly watching her, when Hildburg and Minna came running towards them in great excitement.

"A sail! A sail!" cried the breathless girls. "It is coming nearer every minute. Hasten to the cliffs, and you may see for yourselves."

"You bring the best of news," said Hagen in great delight. "Now, perhaps, we shall see our homes once more. Do you, Hilda, go with the others and await

the arrival of the ship, while I lace on my armour, for we do not know whether the vessel brings friends or foes."

So Hilda departed with the two maidens, and together they made their way to the shore, to find that the ship was still making straight for the island under a steady breeze. Now this vessel belonged to a certain Norse pirate, named Thorstein, who sailed the seas with his men in search of booty. He had run short of water, and, seeing from afar the rocky island in the midst of the waves, he determined to steer for it, with the hope of replenishing his empty casks. As the vessel came near to the shore, Thorstein perceived the three maidens standing on the beach, clad in strange garments, and at first he feared to land, for he thought them sea-witches or water-sprites.

They hailed him, however, inviting him to come on shore; so he dropped anchor, and, putting out a small boat, he rowed to the land with ten of his men. When he came close to the beach, he called out: "Are you human beings, or are you the spirits of this place?"

Hilda raised her voice and answered: "We are unfortunate people who have been cast upon this island. Have pity on us, and take us away."

The Viking leapt on shore and stared at the maidens in amazement, marvelling at their beauty. "Tell me who you are," he said, "and how you came here, for I cannot but wonder to find three such fair maidens on this desolate island."

Hilda then proceeded to tell their whole story; and the pirate, on learning that the girls were ladies of noble



“The Viking leapt on shore and stared at the maidens in amazement.”

birth, determined to take them on board his vessel and to hold them at ransom. Just as he was thinking of carrying out his plan, the steel-clad figure of Hagen appeared, clambering down the cliff path. Thorstein looked at him in blank surprise, and cried out: "The island is surely bewitched, for never have I seen such marvels as it contains. Who, in Woden's name, is this who comes armed and accoutred like a Christian knight?"

"This is our comrade and protector," answered Hilda. "He is Hagen of Ireland, son of King Sigeband, of whom you may perchance have heard."

"I have heard of him indeed," replied the Viking, tugging at his beard. And so he had in good truth, for Sigeband had destroyed many a good ship of his, and had driven back with great slaughter many a raid he had made on the Irish coast. But Thorstein said nothing of this, though he rejoiced in his heart that the opportunity had now come for him to avenge himself upon his enemy's son.

He concealed his joy, however, and greeted Hagen as a friend, expressing his willingness to convey him and his companions back to their homes. Hagen thanked him warmly, and the little party set off for the Norse ship, where Thorstein placed meat and drink before them, and set out for their use the best raiment of his store.

Meanwhile the mariners proceeded to water their ship, and when all was ready for departure, Thorstein called Hagen up on deck, where his men were all gathered together, with weapons ready to their hand. Then the

Viking gave way to his rage, and cried : "The time has now come to avenge myself for the grievous injuries which I have received at the hands of King Sigeband and his men. You, his son, shall pay dearly for the wrongs I have suffered."

"If you have suffered injury," replied Hagen, "I am sure that my father will be ready to make amends, if you take me back in safety to his castle."

"Take you back I will indeed," replied Thorstein, "but dead, and not alive, will I deliver you into your father's hands. Ho ! men, seize this fellow, and bind him with chains."

The wild Norsemen at once drew their swords and rushed at Hagen, but little did they suspect the young hero's strength. Tearing his broadsword from its sheath, he fell upon them with such violence that they ran from him like sheep, and retreated in a confused mass into the waist of the ship. Hither Hagen followed them, shouting with rage and brandishing his great sword like a giant. All who fought with him fell before his blows, and the remainder fled to the far end of the ship, where they entreated his mercy.

Then Hagen rushed upon Thorstein and would have slain him, but at that moment a soft hand was laid upon his arm. Turning, he saw that it was Hilda, who, hearing the clash of swords, had come on deck to learn what it meant. "Have mercy !" said the gentle maiden. "Stay your hand, for you have slain enough men this day." Hildburg and Minna, who had followed her to the deck, now added their prayers to hers, and begged for the pirate's life.

Hagen's wrath vanished at their gentle words, and he sheathed his sword, saying to Thorstein: "At the request of these maidens I spare your life, but only on condition that you give me the word of a Norseman to steer at once for my father's castle of Balian."

Thorstein was only too glad to consent, and no further opposition was to be feared from the remnant of the crew. The anchor was weighed, and the men sat down to their oars, for the wind was now unfavourable. With right good will they pulled, until the stout ashen blades bent beneath their weight, and the vessel leapt lightly over the waves towards the distant land of Ireland.

As they sped along, Hagen and the three maidens leant over the side of the good ship and gazed intently at the little island, the shores of which grew every moment more indistinct. At last it disappeared altogether in the broad bosom of the sea, and the watchers could not repress a sigh, for, though they were glad to be bound for the dwelling-place of men, they could not but feel sad to see the last of the lovely island, which had been their home for so long.

On the next day, the wind suddenly veered round to a favourable quarter; so the great sail was hoisted, and it soon swelled out before the steady breeze. Day after day the wind held good, and in due time the green shores of Erin came into sight. Slowly the ship crept along the coast, until the voyagers came in view of the high walls and towers of the castle of Balian.

King Sigeband had already observed the approaching vessel from his watch-tower, and, thinking that it bore a crew of Norse raiders, he drew up his men in line of

battle along the shore, and prepared to give the pirates a warm reception. Great was his surprise when a small boat put off from the ship, and a knight in complete armour stepped ashore, who proclaimed himself to be his long-lost son.

Then the king took his son in his arms, and the queen, hastening from the castle, wept for joy at the return of one whom she had long mourned as dead. The joy-bells rang out from the castle turrets, and all of its inhabitants gave themselves up to rejoicing and revelry. King Sigeband freely forgave Thorstein the Viking for his misdeeds, because it was in his ship that his son had been restored to him. He made a firm peace with the Norseman, and neither of them ever made war upon the other again.

The three maidens, companions of Hagen's exile, were received with all honour and courtesy. Shortly afterwards, the prince took to wife Hilda of Saxony, while Minna and Hildburg were wedded to two noble Irish dukes. Hagen won name and fame for himself in all parts of the world, and his great deeds were the subject of many an ancient song and story. On the death of King Sigeband, Hagen reigned in his stead, and became one of the most powerful kings in the world, loved and respected by his subjects, and honoured by the monarchs of many a foreign land.

From the Gudrunlied.



THE KNIGHT OF THE SWAN

I. The Guardians of The Holy Grail

ON the summit of a mountain in the land of Spain, there once stood a wonderful temple, built of rare stone and adorned with gold and silver and costly gems. There was nowhere in the world so splendid a temple as this, and it contained a treasure which was precious beyond compare. This was the Holy Grail, which had been brought there by angels, and which was guarded night and day by a band of valiant knights, whose lives were devoted to its service.

These knights were gifted with strength more than human. When they went forth to battle, no man could stand against them. Because their hearts were pure, no one could overcome them, and the side upon which they

fought was bound to be victorious. Since the Saracens had been conquered, however, it was not often that they went out to fight. Still, from time to time, the sound of a silver bell in the heavens called one or other of them to do battle in the cause of justice or virtue.

Amongst the chief of the knights of the temple were King Parsival and his son Lohengrin. The latter was but a youth, who had never had an opportunity of proving his valour. He eagerly awaited the moment when he should be called upon to succour the distressed, or to defend the rights of the innocent. At length, one evening when the knights were all assembled in the royal hall, the sweet tone of the silver bell was heard in the distance. Nearer and nearer came the sound until it echoed through the hall, while at the same time words of flame appeared upon the wall announcing that Lohengrin was the hero chosen by God to defend the oppressed.

He leapt to his feet with a cry of delight, and all his comrades shouted: "Hail, Lohengrin, chosen of the Lord!" His father, King Parsival, bestowed his blessing upon the youthful knight, and said: "Now that you are going forth into the world, my son, remember that the mystic power of the Holy Grail goes with you. But, mark well, it will remain with you only so long as you do not make known to others who you are or whence you come."

The young man bowed his head and said: "Such, father, I know well to be the stern rule of our order."

The king continued: "The person whom you go to defend must accept you as champion without doubt or

question. Yet, if the one you serve does ask your name, you are bound to tell it. At that moment, the holy power will desert you, and you must immediately return to the home of your order, the temple of the Holy Grail."

"I trust, father," replied the young man, "that I shall be considered worthy of faith strong enough to stand the test of silence."

The knights then brought from the armoury the war-gear which Lohengrin was to assume. They placed upon him a splendid suit of armour inlaid with gold, and buckled to his waist the great sword of King Parsival himself. On his head they laced a helmet of polished steel, of which the crest was a white dove.

Then Lohengrin set off from the temple, accompanied by King Parsival and all the knights. They proceeded slowly down the mountain-side, until they reached a river which flowed around its base. There, close by the bank, they saw a strange sight, for a golden boat floated upon the waters, towed by a swan with a crown of gold about its neck.

King Parsival laid his hand upon his son's shoulder and said: "This boat will convey you to the land to which you are bound. Enter it with all confidence. But before you go, take this golden horn of mine, fasten it around your neck, and when you have arrived at your journey's end, sound three times upon the horn and we shall know. Likewise, when you are about to return, wind your horn thrice again, so that we may make ready for your coming."

. Lohengrin fastened the horn about his neck by a golden chain, and after taking a tender farewell of his father, sprang into the boat, which was gently drawn away towards the sea by the swan. Swiftly they went, until the Holy Mountain and the group of knights were lost to sight, and all the while the air was filled with strains of delightful music.

When at length the boat reached the sea, the music ceased, and there was no sound to be heard save the moan of the wind and the swirl of the waters. Then the knight laid himself down in the bottom of the boat, all armed as he was, and fell fast asleep, undisturbed by the waves which surged and rolled around him.

II. FAIR ELSA OF BRABANT

While Lohengrin in his swan-boat is floating gently over the open sea, let us turn to the distant country of Brabant, which was, at this time, ruled by a youthful duchess of such great beauty that she was always called "Fair Elsa." So beautiful and wealthy a lady was bound to have many suitors; and this was the case with Elsa, though she cared for none of them, and would have been well pleased to be rid of them all.

The truth was that the lady had fallen in love with some one whom she had never seen. One day, whilst out hunting, she became separated from her companions, and, wearied with the chase, she fell asleep at the foot of a great oak. As she slept, strains of beautiful music fell upon her ears, and a vision appeared to her of a young knight, handsome as the day, who was clad in



shining armour, and wore a helmet with a white dove as crest.

"Stay with me, my prince," she cried in her dream, but the vision faded away and she awoke. From that time she was convinced that the knight of her dream would come to her in reality, and she vowed that she would wait for him, and would wed no other man.

So she had nought but scornful looks and cold words for those who sought her hand. One of them, indeed, she both disliked and feared, and this was that great warrior Count Frederick of Telramund. The father of the duchess, on his death-bed, had promised her in marriage to this powerful lord, but when the time came for

her to wed she refused. "I will not marry," said she, "a man to whom I cannot give my heart as well as my hand."

"Think well, Elsa, before you refuse me," said the count. "Many are the knights and men-at-arms who follow in my train, and it might go ill with you if you made an enemy of me."

"I care nothing for your threats," replied the maiden. "I will never consent to be wedded to you because, if you would know it, I have vowed myself to another."

"To another?" cried the astonished count. "Tell me his name, girl, and disclose his rank."

This, however, the duchess could not do, but was forced to hang her head in some confusion.

"Ah!" cried the count. "If you cannot tell his name, you must have some unworthy reason for hiding it. He is doubtless some fellow of low birth, to wed whom is a crime for a lady of your position. The king shall know of this, and you shall be brought before his judgment-seat to meet your trial for this offence." And with these words the count strode angrily from the room.

Elsa was very much perturbed at the count's threat, for the charge which he threatened to bring against her was considered a very serious one in those days, and as she could make no answer to it, she saw that in all probability she would be cast, disgraced and dishonoured, into prison.

In her distress, she wandered out into the fields to seek reflection under the open sky, with the free winds of heaven playing around her. After a time she seated

herself in a shady grove, and, lulled by the sweet songs of the birds, she fell asleep.

Then it seemed to her that the hero of her dreams came to her once more, and in his hand he held a little silver bell, and he said to her softly : "Have no fear, Elsa, I am your own true knight and champion, and will come to you in the hour of need. Take this little silver bell, and, when you require my assistance, ring it and I will hasten to your side."

Then the girl awoke, and wept to find that it was only a dream. But amidst her tears, she was startled to hear the low, sweet tone of a bell, and looking up she saw a white dove hovering in the air close by. Fastened around its neck was the very bell that her knight had carried. She stretched out her arms towards the bird, and cried : "Sweet dove, have pity upon me !"

In answer to her cry, the dove fluttered down upon her shoulder, and permitted her to detach the silver bell, after which it flew swiftly away over the tree-tops. Elsa's misery now gave place to feelings of gladness and comfort. She returned to the palace without fear or misgiving, for she felt that she was placed under the protection of heaven.

Within a few weeks, the count showed that he had carried out his threat, for messengers came from King Heinrich of Germany summoning Elsa to appear before his judgment-seat at Cologne. Such a summons could not be disobeyed, so preparations were at once made for the journey, and the duchess set off with a large retinue, and reached the Rhine after a long and toilsome march.

King Heinrich was a brave and a just man, and he

was much disturbed to hear that the wealthy Elsa of Brabant was contemplating marriage with a person of low birth. His kingdom sorely needed defenders, for it was being hard pressed in the south by hordes of wild Hungarians, and he hoped that Elsa would have chosen as a husband some famous warrior, who could have led her troops to battle under his standard. Still, he loved justice, and did not intend that the duchess should be punished unless her guilt could be proved.

At last the day for the trial came. Outside the walls of Cologne, there was a wide meadow overlooking the Rhine, where the king caused a great pavilion to be erected. Here he ordered that the trial should take place, so that he might hear the case and deliver his judgment in public. He took his seat upon a splendid throne in front of the pavilion, with his knights and men-at-arms around him, and before him stood, on either side, Count Frederick of Telramund, Elsa of Brabant, and their respective followers.

"Elsa, Duchess of Brabant," said the king, "you stand charged with the intention to wed a man of lowly birth, one of your own vassals. Such is against the law of this realm, and you are here called upon to say what you can in your defence. Speak, and fear nothing."

Elsa raised her head and answered proudly: "It is false."

"Tell us, then," said the king, "the name and rank of the man whom you have chosen to be your husband."

At this the maiden cast down her eyes, and was forced to confess that she could not. Thereupon a murmur

arose from the crowd, and a look of triumph shone on Count Frederick's dark countenance.

The king's face hardened, and he ordered the count to bring forward his witnesses. Three of them appeared, miserable wretches who had been bribed to give false evidence. The two first, however, soon showed by their conflicting statements that they had perjured themselves, and the king refused to hear the third.

"Away with them!" he cried in righteous anger. "If the case can be settled in no other way, it shall be decided by the judgment of God. Count Telramund shall support his accusation by mortal combat with the champion of Elsa of Brabant, and may God defend the right!"

III. ELSA'S CHAMPION

A champion was now to be found to defend the honour of the duchess, so a herald advanced into the middle of the meadow, and sounding his trumpet, he called loudly for a knight of high degree to come forward to do battle with Count Telramund for the sake of Elsa of Brabant.

The challenge was received in silence, for all men feared the well-known strength and skill of the count. Again the herald called forth his challenge, but again it met with no response. Then the maiden remembered her silver bell. She drew it out and rang it, and the sweet tones could be heard by all the vast concourse of people gathered in that space. Louder and louder grew the sound, until its echoes were lost in the distant mountains.

Once again the herald gave a flourish upon his

trumpet, and called for a champion to come forward and defend the duchess. Even as he spoke, strains of entrancing music were heard in the air. Sounds so sweet had never been heard before, and every one present stood in silence and listened. Then a confused murmur arose, and voices could be heard crying: "Look! Look! A miracle! A marvel!"

For up the Rhine a golden boat was gliding, drawn by a white swan with a golden crown about its neck. In this boat lay a fully-armed knight fast asleep. The boat slowly approached the shore, and as it touched the bank the knight awoke, and, stepping out, put a golden horn to his lips and sounded it thrice, and the clear notes travelled down the river and were lost in the distance.

Then the herald advanced towards the knight and asked him his name and rank.

"My name is Lohengrin," he replied, "and I am of royal birth. More than that I will not say."

So the herald presented him to the king, who said to him: "It is enough. Your noble face and bearing proclaim your high rank. Are you prepared to do battle for the sake of this lady?" And he pointed to Elsa, who was looking at the young man with wonder and delight, for she recognised in him her dream-hero.

"Willingly," replied Lohengrin, "for I have been sent hither to defend the cause of the innocent and the oppressed."

So the trumpets called to battle, and the two champions faced each other, sword in hand, in the midst of the throng. Fast and thick fell the blows, and Telramund soon began to know that he had met his match. His

best strokes and strongest blows were turned aside with ease by this smiling youth, who never seemed to tire. His face turned pale, and beads of perspiration stood upon his brow, for he realised that death was near at hand. Still he fought on desperately, though every moment his strokes grew wilder and wilder. At last he gave a blind thrust, and Lohengrin stepping aside, he fell full length upon the ground, while the young knight placed his sword at his adversary's throat.

"Yield!" cried Lohengrin. "It is not your life I seek, but the safety of this maiden whom you have wrongfully accused."

So Count Telramund yielded to the stranger knight, and was given his life on condition that he left the country and remained in exile. This he did, and spent the remainder of his days abroad, where he was slain many years after, fighting bravely against the Huns.

The leniency which Lohengrin had shown to the conquered count was very pleasing to the people, and the air rang with their cries, hailing him as the bravest and most perfect knight in Christendom.

The king rose to his feet and said: "Right well have you fought, noble knight, and well do you merit your victory. Accompany us upon our expedition against the fierce Hungarians who are laying waste our southern frontier, and you shall command the men whom the fair duchess will send us from Brabant."

Lohengrin gladly accepted this offer on condition that it was sanctioned by the duchess herself. Elsa came up at that moment and readily agreed, thanking the young



“ The young knight placed his sword_at his adversary's throat.”

hero most warmly for the great service he had rendered her.

"All that I have is yours," said she. "You are my champion and my perfect knight."

Accompanied by Lohengrin, Fair Elsa and her train now set off for Antwerp, the capital of Brabant. On the way, these two became very dear to each other, and upon their arrival at Antwerp, they were married in great state in the splendid cathedral of the city.

That same day Lohengrin said to his wife: "Elsa, I am now your husband, and will do all that I can to make you happy. But there is one thing that you must never do. You must never question me as to my parentage, or the place from which I come. If you do, I shall be compelled to tell you, but at that very hour I must leave you for ever."

So Elsa promised that the forbidden question should never pass her lips. She was as happy as the livelong day, and soon her past sorrows began to fade from her memory. Her joy was, however, short-lived, for a summons came from the king for Lohengrin to gather his men together and march to Cologne, where the great army was assembling. Elsa accompanied her husband to the royal city, where they found a great company of famous knights and their ladies.

Some of King Heinrich's nobles did not look upon Lohengrin with favour. They were envious of his good fortune, and were angry that an unknown knight should have married so powerful a person as Elsa of Brabant, and should have been given the command of her troops. Evil rumours were spread about, that Lohengrin was the

son of a foreign magician, and that it was only by means of his magic art that he had overcome Count Telramund.

Before long these false rumours came to Elsa's ears, and caused her great pain. She knew the nobleness of her husband's nature, and longed to be able to give the lie to those people who spoke evil of him. So much did this desire possess her mind that she forgot her solemn promise, and, going to her husband one day, she told him her trouble and said: "Give me the means to justify you before these scandal-bearers. Tell me, I entreat you, who you are and whence you come."

"Dear wife," replied Lohengrin sorrowfully, "by your rash words you have destroyed our happiness. As you have asked me the question, I am bound to reply. To-morrow, before the king and his court, I will answer you, but at that moment I must part from you for ever."

On the morrow, the hero led his weeping wife before the king and his nobles, who were assembled in the self-same meadow in which Lohengrin had fought his great battle with Count Telramund. There he told them of the question which Elsa had put to him, and how he was bound to answer it. He told them of his great father, King Parsival, and of his home in the temple of the Holy Grail. He spoke of his first coming to Cologne in obedience to the Divine command, and of the necessity for his immediate return.

"I would gladly have fought beneath your banner, noble king," he continued, "but fate calls me away. The summons even now is sounding in my ears, and I must obey. But be of good heart, your power will prevail over your enemies, and you will win immortal glory."

As he spoke, sad strains of music filled the air, and in the distance appeared the golden boat drawn by the crowned swan, the boat in which he had come to fight for Elsa's honour. At the sight, the duchess clasped him in her arms and cried: "Husband, do not leave me. I cannot live without you. What can I do to atone for my fault?"

"Nothing, sweet wife," replied Lohengrin. "The pain of parting is as great for me as for you, but a higher will than mine bids me go. I cannot disobey. Farewell."

With tears in his eyes, the knight gently disengaged himself from Fair Elsa's arms, and sprang into the boat, which was rapidly drawn away down the stream towards his distant home. Half mad with grief, the duchess watched him go, and then, without a word to any one, she returned with her followers to her own land. She did not long survive the parting from her husband, but, after a few years' bitter sorrow, she died, happy at the last in the full belief that she was about to rejoin her hero in the blessed region where he dwelt.

From Wolfram von Eschenbach's "Lohengrin."



“So the foemen have fired the gate, men of mine?
And the water is spent and gone?
Then bring me a cup of red Ahr-wine;
I never shall drink but this one.

“And reach me my harness, and saddle my horse,
And lead him me round to the door;
He must take such a leap to-night perforce,
As horse never took before.

“I have fought my fight, I have lived my life,
I have drunk my share of wine;
From Trier to Coln there was never a knight
Led a merrier life than mine.

“I have lived by the saddle for years two score;
And if I must die on tree,
Then the old saddle-tree, which has borne me of yore,
Is the properest timber for me.

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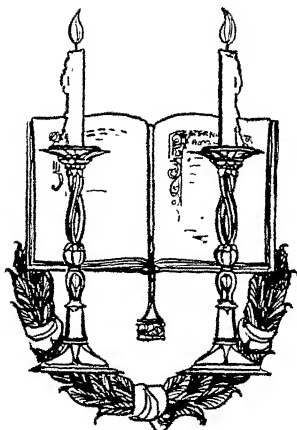
“So now to show bishop, and burgher, and priest,
How the Altenahr hawk can die—
If they smoke the old falcon out of his nest,
He must take to his wings and fly.”

He harnessed himself by the clear moonshine,
And he mounted his horse at the door;
And he drained such a cup of the red Ahr-wine
As man never drained before.

He spurred the old horse, and he held him tight,
And he leapt him over the wall,
Out over the cliff, out into the night,
Three hundred feet of fall.

They found him next morning below in the glen,
With never a bone in him whole—
A mass, or a prayer, now, good gentlemen,
For such a bold rider's soul!

Charles Kingsley.





The THRALL'S SWORD

At the end of the days of Harold Fairhair, there was a mighty lord in Norway whose name was Thorkel Goldhelm, and he dwelt in Surnadale. He had a wife, and they had two sons. The name of the eldest was Ari, and the second was called Gisli. They were both young men of promise.

There was a man, too, named Isi, who ruled over the Fardarfolk. His daughter's name was Gudrida, and she was the fairest of women. Ari, Thorkel's son, asked her to wife, and she was wedded to him. He got a great dower with her, and amongst the rest that she brought with her from her home was a man named Kol: he was of high degree, but he had been taken captive in war, and was called a Thrall. So he came with Gudrida to Surnadale. Thorkel gave over to his son Ari a rich farm up in the dale, and there he set up his abode, and was looked on as a rising man.

But now our story goes on to tell of a man named Bjorn, nicknamed Bjorn the Black. He was a Bearsark, and much given to duels. Twelve men went at his heel, and besides he was skilled in the black art, and no steel could touch his skin. No wonder he was unbeloved by the people, for he turned aside as he listed into the houses of men, and took away their wives and children, and made them servants in his household. All raised an outcry when he came, and all were glad when he went away.

Well, as soon as this Bjorn heard that Ari had brought home a fair wife with a rich dowry, he thought he would have a finger in that pie. So he turned his steps thither with his crew, and reached the house at eventide.

As soon as Ari and Bjorn met, Bjorn told him that he meant to be the master, and that Gudrida the housewife should give up to him all her rich dowry. As for Ari, he said he might please himself, go away or stay, so long as he let Bjorn have his wife's dowry. But Ari said he would not go away, nor would he let him have any of his goods.

"Very well!" says Bjorn, "thou shalt have another choice. I will challenge thee to fight on the island, if thou darest, three days from this, and then we will try who is the stronger; and he, too, shall take all the other's goods who wins the day. Now, mind, I will neither ransom myself with money, nor will I suffer any one else to ransom himself. One shall conquer and the other die."

Ari said he was willing enough to fight; so the Bearsarks went their way and armed them for battle. To

make a long story short, they met on the island, and the end of their struggle was that Ari fell; but the Bearsark was not wounded, for no steel would touch him.

Now Bjorn thought he had won wife, and land, and goods, and he gave out that he meant to go at even to Ari's house to claim his own.

Then Gisli, Ari's brother, answered and said: "It will soon be all over with me and mine if this disgrace comes to pass, that this ruffian tramples us under foot. But this shall never be, for I will challenge thee at once to battle to-morrow morning. I would far rather fall on the island than bear this shame."

"Well and good," says Bjorn; "thou and thy kith and kin shall all fall one after the other, if ye dare to fight with me."

After that they parted, and Gisli went home to the house that Ari had owned. Now the tidings were told of what had happened on the island, and of Ari's death, and all thought that a great blow to the house. But Gisli went to Gudrida, and told her of Ari's fall, and how they were to fight the very next morning.

"That is a bootless undertaking," said Gudrida, "and I fear it will not turn out well for thee, unless thou hast other help to lean on."

"Ah!" said Gisli, "then I beg that thou and all else who are likeliest to yield help will do their best, that victory may seem more hopeful than it now looks."

"There is a man," said Gudrida, "who, methinks, is likeliest to be able to help in this matter, so that it may be well with thee."

"Who is that?" asks Gisli.

"It is Kol, my foster-father," was the answer, "for I ween he has a sword that is said to be better than most others, though he seems to set little store by it, for he calls it his 'Chopper'; but whoever wields that sword wins the day."

So they sent for Kol, and he came to meet Gisli and Gudrida.

"Hast thou ever a good sword?" asked Gisli.

"My sword is no great treasure," answers Kol; "but yet there are many things in the churl's cot which are not in the king's grange."

"Wilt thou not lend me the sword for my duel with Bjorn?" said Gisli.

"Ah!" said Kol, "then will happen what ever happens with these things that are treasures—you will never wish to give it up. But for all that, I tell thee now that this sword will bite whatever its blow falls on, be it iron or aught else; nor can its edge be deadened by spells, for it was forged by the Dwarfs, and its name is 'Graysteel.' And now make up thy mind that I shall take it very ill if I do not get the sword back when I claim it."

"It were most unfair," says Gisli, "that thou shouldst not get back the sword, after I have had use of it in my need."

Now Gisli takes the sword, and the night glides away. Next morn they set off to the island, and Gisli and Bjorn stood face to face on it. Then Gisli bade Bjorn strike the first blow.

"No one has ever made me that offer before," said

Bjorn; "indeed no one has ever challenged me before this day save thou."

So Bjorn made a blow at Gisli, but Gisli threw his shield before him, and the sword hewed off from the shield all that it smote from below the handle.

Then Gisli smote at Bjorn in his turn, and the stroke fell on the tail of the shield and shore it right off, and then passed on and struck off his leg below the knee. One other stroke he dealt him and took off his head. Then he and his men turned on Bjorn's followers, and some were slain and some chased away into the woods.

After that, Gisli went home and got good fame for this feat, and then he took the farm as his heritage after Ari his brother; and he got Gudrida also to wife, for he would not let a good woman go out of the family. And time rolled on, but he did not give up the good sword, nor had Kol ever asked for it.

One day they two met out of doors, and Gisli had "Graysteel" in his hand, and Kol had an axe. Kol asked whether he thought the sword had stood him in good stead, and Gisli was full of its praises.

"Well now," said Kol, "I should like to have it back, if thou thinkest it has done thee good service in thy need."

"Wilt thou sell it?" says Gisli.

"No," says Kol.

"I will give thee thy freedom and goods, so that thou mayest fare whither thou wilt with other men."

"I will not sell it," says Kol.

"Then I will give thee thy freedom, and lease or give thee land, and besides I will give thee sheep and cattle and goods as much as thou needest."

"I will not sell it a whit more for that," says Kol.

"Indeed," says Gisli, "thou art too wilful to cling to it thus. Put thine own price on it—any sum thou choosest in money—and be sure I will not stand at trifles if thou wilt come to terms in some way. Besides, I will give thee thy freedom and a becoming wife, if thou hast any liking for one."

"There is no use talking about it," says Kol; "I will not sell it whatsoever thou offerest. But now it just comes to what I feared at first, when I said I was not sure whether thou wouldst be ready to give the sword up, if thou knewest what virtue was in it."

"And I too," says Gisli, "will say what will happen. Good will befall neither of us, for I have not the heart to give up the sword, and it shall never come into any other man's hand than mine if I may have my will."

Then Kol lifted up his axe, while Gisli brandished "Graysteel," and each smote at the other. Kol's blow fell on Gisli's head, so that it sank into the brain, but the sword fell on Kol's head and did not bite; but still the blow was so stoutly dealt that the skull was shattered and the sword broke asunder.

Then Kol said: "It had been better now that I had got back my sword when I asked for it; and yet this is but the beginning of the ill-luck which it will bring on thy kith and kin."

Thus both of them lost their lives, and it happened even as the thrall had foretold. Of Gisli's kin all were unlucky, and all, after unhappy lives, met their death by the battle-axe or the sword.

From the Gisli Saga. Told by Sir George Dasent.



SIR OLF rode fast towards Thurlston's walls
To meet his bride in his father's halls.

He saw blue lights flit over the graves;
The elves came forth from their forest caves.

They danced a-near the glossy strand,
And the Erl King's daughter held out her hand.

"O welcome, Sir Olf, to our jubilee,
Step into the circle and dance with me."

"I dare not dance, I dare not stay,
To-morrow will be my nuptial day."

"Two golden spurs I will give to thee,
And I pray thee, Sir Olf, to tarry with me."

"I dare not tarry, I dare not delay,
To-morrow is fixed for my nuptial day."

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"Will give thee a shirt so nice and fine,
Was bleached yestreen in the new moonshine."

"I dare not hearken to elf or fay,
To-morrow is fixed for my nuptial day."

"A measure of gold will I give unto thee,
And I pray thee, Sir Olf, to dance with me."

"The measure of gold I will carry away,
But I dare not dance and I dare not stay."

"Then, since thou wilt go, even go with a blight,
A true lover's token I leave thee, Sir Knight."

She lightly struck with her wand on his heart,
And he swooned and swooned from the deadly smart.

She lifted him up on his coal-black steed;
"Now hie thee away with a fatal speed!"

Then shone the moon and howled the wolf,
And the sheen and howl awoke Sir Olf.

He rode over mead, he rode over moor,
He rode till he rode to his own house door.

Within sate, white as the marble, his bride,
But his grey-haired mother stood watching outside.

"My son, my son, thou art haggard and wan;
Thy brow is the brow of a dying man."

"And haggard and wan I well may be,
For the Erl King's daughter hath wounded me!"

"I pray thee, my son, dismount and bide;
There is mist on the eyes of thy pining bride."

THE ERL KING'S DAUGHTER 171

"O mother, I should but drop dead from my steed;
I will wander abroad for the strength I need."

"And what shall I tell thy bride, my son,
When the morning dawns and the tiring is done?"

"O tell my bride that I rode to the wood,
With my hound in leash and my hawk in hood."

When morning dawned with crimson and grey,
The bride came forth in her wedding array.

They poured out mead, they poured out wine;
"Now, where is thy son, O gold-mother mine?"

"My son, gold-daughter, rode into the wood,
With his hounds in leash and his hawk in hood."

Then the bride grew sick with an ominous dread—
"O woe is me, Sir Olf is dead."

She drooped like a lily which feels the blast,
She drooped and drooped till she died at last.

They rest in the charnel side by side,
The stricken Sir Olf and his faithful bride.

But the Erl King's daughter dances still
When the moonlight sleeps on the frosted hill.

Translated from the Danish by James Mangan.





NORSEMEN · IN THE · NEW · WORLD

I
Of the Voyage of Biarne
the son of Heriulf.

CHRISTOPHER COLUMBUS is usually regarded as the discoverer of the New World, yet it is a remarkable fact that no less than four hundred years before his birth, the mainland of America was discovered and partly explored by the fearless Norsemen.

They were heroes, those old Vikings, just as much as the Argonauts who followed Jason in search of the Golden Fleece, or the warriors who fought by the side of Ulysses under the walls of Troy. In their little vessels, overcrowded with men, and ill-provided with stores of food and water, they ventured without a trace of fear into the dangers of an unknown ocean. They took to their ships and crossed the seas, as if such a voyage were the most natural undertaking in the world; and in the simply-told narrative of their adventures, there is no mention of the hardships and perils which

they must have endured. And now to our ancient Saga.

In Iceland there lived a man named Heriulf, who possessed lands between Vag and Reykaness. His wife was called Thorgerd, and their son was called Biarne.

Now Biarne was a very promising young man. Even when a boy he was seized with the desire to go abroad. So he sailed far and wide throughout the world, and soon gathered much wealth and gained a great reputation. In time he possessed a merchant ship of his own, in which he would make long voyages. Yet he never spent more than a year away from home, and always returned to spend the following year with his father.

While Biarne was away upon one of his voyages, Eric the Red, one of the chief men of Iceland, determined to sail westwards and settle down in Greenland. With him went Heriulf, the father of Biarne, and many others, for Eric was held in great consideration and honoured by all. When Biarne came home in the summer, he was amazed to find the old homestead deserted, and to learn that his father had sailed for Greenland.

He would not unload his vessel, and when his crew asked him what he intended to do, he replied that he was resolved to follow his old custom of taking up his winter abode with his father. "So I will steer for Greenland," said he, "if you will go with me." They one and all agreed to go with him, but Biarne said: "Think well before you decide, for our expedition will

not be without danger. None of us have ever been on the Greenland sea before, nor do we even know the exact direction in which the land lies."

Nevertheless they set out to sea as soon as they were ready, and sailed for three days, until they lost sight of the land they had left. But when the wind failed, a north wind with fog set in, and they knew not whither they were sailing; and this lasted many days.

At last they saw the sun, and could distinguish the quarters of the sky. So they hoisted sail again, and sailed a whole day and night, when they made land. They spoke among themselves about what this land could be, and Biarne said that, in his opinion, it could not be Greenland. On the question if he should sail nearer to it, he said: "It is my advice that we sail close up to this land."

They did so, and they soon saw that the land was without mountains, also that it was covered with thick woods, and that there were small hills inland. They left the land on the larboard side, and sailed for two days and nights before they got sight of land again. Then the crew asked Biarne if he thought that this was Greenland, but Biarne replied: "This cannot be Greenland, any more than the land which we saw before, for in Greenland, it is said, there are great snow-covered mountains." They soon came near the land, and saw that it was flat and covered with trees.

Now, as the wind fell, the ship's people said: "Let us make for the land, for we are in need of wood and water." But Biarne would not agree to it. "You are

not in want of either," said he. And the men blamed him for this, but he ordered them to hoist the sail, which was done.

They now turned the ship's bow from the land, and sailed along for three days and nights with a fine breeze from the south-west. Then they saw a third land, which was high and mountainous, and the mountains were covered with snow. Then the crew asked Biarne if he would land here, but he refused altogether. "In my opinion," said he, "the land is not what we are seeking." So they let the sails stand, and kept along the land, and saw that it was an island.

Then they turned from the land, and stood out to sea with the same breeze; but the gale increased, and Biarne ordered a reef to be taken in, and not to sail harder than the ship and her tackle could easily bear.

After sailing for three days and nights they made land for the fourth time, and when they asked Biarne if he thought this was Greenland or not, Biarne replied: "This is most like what has been told me of Greenland, and here we shall take to the land."

They did so, and came to the land in the evening under a ness, where they found a boat. Now this was the very ness upon which Biarne's father Heriulf had built his dwelling, and from that it is called Heriulfness. Biarne went to his father's house, where he was greeted with much joy. He gave up seafaring, and dwelt with his father Heriulf as long as he lived, and after his father's death he continued to dwell there when at home.

II. OF LEIF ERICSON'S DISCOVERY OF LAND

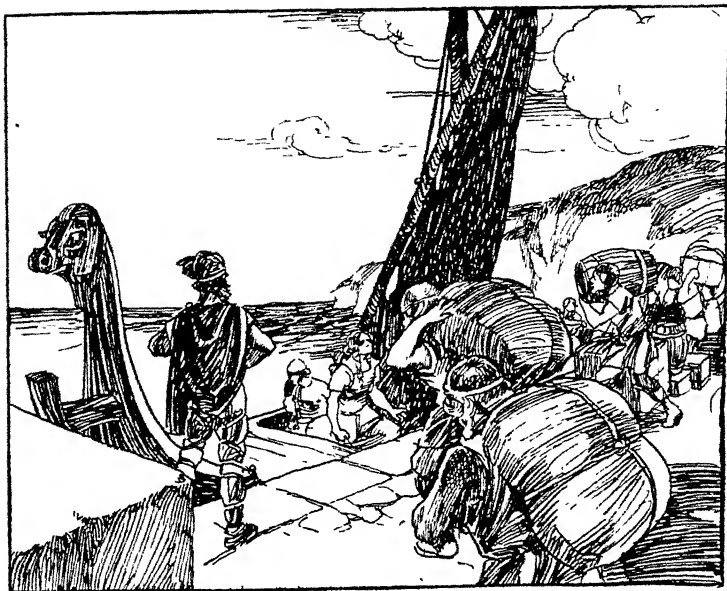
Now, Biarne talked much of this expedition of his, on which he had discovered unknown lands; and people thought that he had not been very curious to get knowledge, as he could not give any account of those countries, and he was somewhat blamed because of this.

Loudest in blame was Leif, the son of Eric the Red, who had settled in Brattahlid in Greenland. "I will venture," said he, "where Biarne Heriulfson has not dared to set foot." So he went over to Biarne and bought his ship from him, and manned the vessel, so that in all there were thirty-five men on board. He had no difficulty in finding men, for he was both stout and strong, and he was besides a prudent, sagacious man in all respects.

Leif begged his father Eric to go as commander of the expedition, but he shook his head and said: "No, my son. I am too old for such a voyage. I am not so well able as formerly to undergo the hardships of the sea."

Then said Leif: "Come with us, I beg you, my father, for of all our relations none are so likely to have good luck on such an expedition as you." So Eric consented, and rode from home with Leif when they had got all ready for sea. But when they were coming near to the ship, the horse on which Eric was riding stumbled, and the old man fell and hurt his foot.

"This is an ill omen," he cried. "I see that it is not destined that I should discover more lands than this of



Greenland, in which we dwell. Therefore I will not run hastily into this adventure."

So Eric returned home to Brattahlid, while his son Leif rigged out his vessel. He and his comrades put the ship in order, and went to sea when they were ready.

On they sailed into the unknown west, until they came to the land which Bjarne had last discovered. They sailed up to it, cast anchor, put out a boat, and went on shore. Looking about them, they could see no grass or verdure of any kind. In the distance there was a line of huge snowy mountains, and all the way from the sea up to these snowy ridges, the land was a

rocky plain covered with snow, and it appeared to them a country of no advantages.

Leif said: "It shall not be said of us, as it was of Biarne, that we did not come upon the land, for I will give the country a name and call it Rockyland."¹

Then they went on board again, put out to sea, and in time found another land. They sailed in towards it, cast anchor, put out a boat, and landed. They found that the country was flat, and overgrown with thick woods. The beach consisted of a fine white sand, and was very little above the level of the sea. Then Leif said: "We shall give this land a name according to its appearance, and call it Woodyland."²

They hastened on board once again, and put out to sea with an on-shore wind from the north-east, and sailed along for two days, when they saw land once more. They sailed towards it, and came to an island which lay off the northern shore of the land. As the weather was rough, they landed upon this island to wait until the gale had abated. There was dew upon the grass, and having accidentally got some of the dew upon their hands and put it to their mouths, they thought that they had never tasted anything so sweet.

As soon as the wind had gone down, they went on board again, and sailed into a sound which lay between the island and the mainland. But, as it was ebb-tide, they found the approach to the shore so shallow, that their vessel grounded when they were still far from land. So eager, however, were they to explore the

¹ The antiquaries consider this to have been Newfoundland.

² This is considered to have been some part of Nova Scotia.

country which lay before them, that they took to the boats and rowed towards the shore. When they came near, they perceived the mouth of a small river, up which they rowed until they reached a beautiful lake, from which the river flowed.

At this discovery they rejoiced, for here was a safe anchorage for their vessel. When the tide had turned, they rowed back to the ship, and towed her up the river, and from thence into the lake, where they cast anchor. Then, with shouts of joy, they set up their tents upon the land, and carried their beds out of the ship. It was good to rest again on shore, after so many weary days upon the sea. Leif resolved to erect a large house, and to put things in order for wintering in this place.

They did not want for salmon, both in the river and in the lake; and they thought the salmon larger than any they had ever seen before. The country appeared to them of so good a kind that it would not be necessary to gather fodder for cattle for the winter. There was no frost in winter, and the grass was not much withered.

Now when they were ready for their house-building, Leif said to his comrades: "I will divide the crew into two divisions and explore the country. Half shall stay at home and do the work, and the other half shall search the land. But the explorers must not wander from each other, nor must they go so far from home that they cannot come back each evening." This they continued to do for some time. Leif changed about, sometimes going with them and sometimes staying with those at home.

It happened one evening that a man of the exploring party was missing; and it was found to be a man from the south country, named Tyrker. Leif was much grieved about this, for Tyrker had been long in his father's house, and he loved him in his childhood. Leif blamed his comrades very much, and prepared to go with twelve men on an expedition to find him; but they had gone only a short way, when they met Tyrker coming towards them, and he was joyfully received.

Leif said to him: "Why are you so late? and why did you leave your comrades?"

"I did not go much farther than they," replied the man, "and yet I have something altogether new to relate, for I have found vines and grapes."

"Is that true, my friend?" said Leif.

"Yes, true it is," answered he; "there can be no doubt, for I was born where there is no scarcity of vines and grapes."

They slept all night, and next morning Leif said to his men: "Now we have two occupations to attend to, and day about; namely, to gather grapes or cut vines, and to fell wood in the forest to load our vessel."

And this advice was followed. Their stern-boat was filled with grapes, and then a cargo of wood was hewn for the vessel. Towards spring they made ready and sailed away; and Leif gave the country a name from its productions, and called it Vineland.¹

They put to sea, and sailed along day after day with a favourable breeze, until at last they came in sight of Greenland once more, and saw the fields below the

¹ Probably Labrador.

snow-covered mountain range. The sight made their hearts merry, and they cheered the good ship as she leapt over the waves on her way to the shore. And from that time Leif advanced greatly in wealth and consideration, so that he became known as Leif the Lucky.

III. OF THORVALD ERICSON, LEIF'S BROTHER

Leif's expedition to Vineland was naturally much talked of; and his brother Thorvald thought that the country had not been explored enough in different places. So Leif said to Thorvald: "You may go, brother, in my ship to Vineland if you like." And so it was done.

Thorvald made ready for his voyage with thirty men. They rigged their ship, and put to sea. Nothing is known of this expedition until they came to Vineland, to the booths put up by Leif, where they made safe the ship and the tackle, and remained quietly all the winter, living on the fish which they caught in the river or the lake.

When spring had come, Thorvald ordered that the vessel should be rigged, and that some of his men should proceed in the long-boat westward along the coast, and explore it during the summer. They thought the country beautiful and well wooded, the distance small between the forest and the sea, and the strand full of white sand. There were also many islands, and very shallow water. They found no abode for man or beast; but upon an island far towards the west they found a

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corn-barn constructed of wood. They found no other trace of human work, and came back in the autumn to Leif's booth.

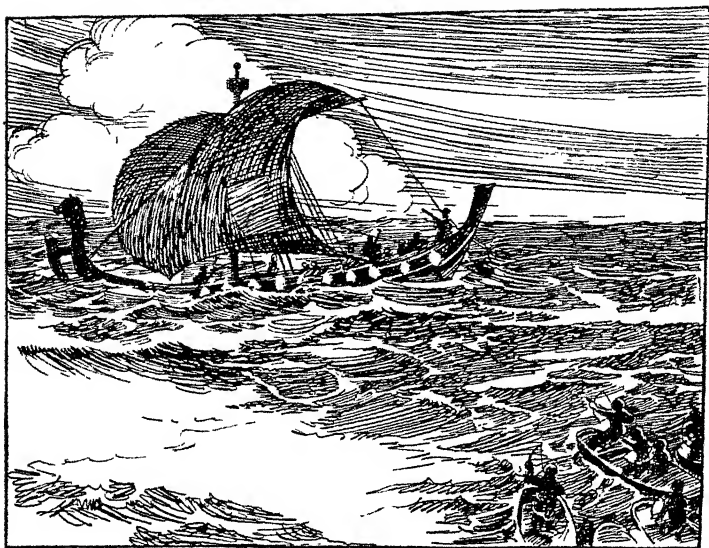
The following spring, Thorvald proceeded eastward in his vessel, and then towards the north along the coast, which was everywhere covered with woods. At length, when they had reached a sheltered spot, they moored the ship to the land, laid out gangways to the shore, and Thorvald with all his ship's company landed.

"This is indeed a beautiful place," said he, "and I would willingly build a farm here, and pass the rest of my days in peace and happiness."

As he spoke, one of his men pointed out three specks upon the sand near the shore. They all hastened down to see what these might be, and they found that the objects, which had looked like specks from the distance, were really three boats made of skins, and under each boat they found three men hiding. So they slew eight of the men, but the other succeeded in placing his boat in the water, and in it he made his escape.

Soon after, a heavy drowsiness came upon them, and try as they might they could not keep themselves awake. They slept for long and were awakened at last by a sudden scream. Mingled with the scream, they thought that they heard the words: "Awake, Thorvald, with all your comrades if you will save your lives. Go on board your ship as fast as you can, and leave this land without delay."

They leapt to their feet at once, and saw in the distance an innumerable multitude of men paddling



in skin-boats towards their vessel. So they raced towards the shore, and managed to board their ship just as the boats laid themselves alongside.

Then said Thorvald: "We must put up our war-screens along the gunwales, and defend ourselves as well as we can; but it will not be wise to use our weapons much against them." And the men thought this advice good, and did accordingly.

The Skrälings¹ shot at them for a while, and then made off as fast as they could, when they saw that there was no hope of boarding the vessel.

Then Thorwald asked if any one was wounded, and he was told that nobody was hurt. But at that moment he himself staggered and fell to the deck, and when

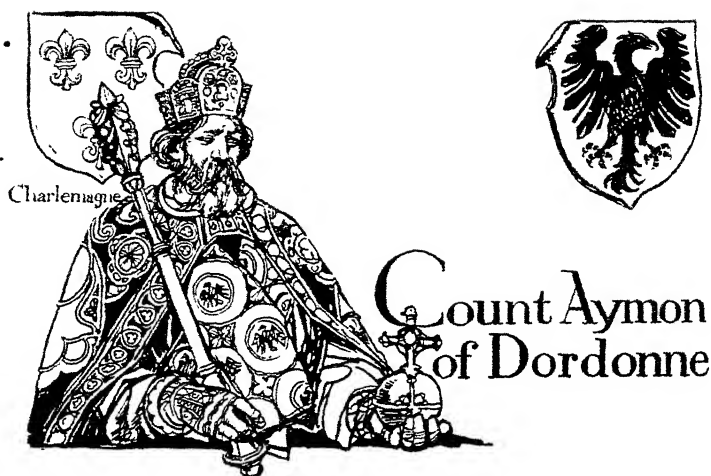
¹ Eskimos.

they picked him up he said: "I have got a wound under the arm. An arrow flew between the gunwale and the shield under my arm; here is the arrow, and it will be my death-wound. Now I advise you to make ready with all speed to return; but you shall first carry me up to that place at which I thought to build for myself a farm. It may be that it was true what I said, that there I should pass the rest of my days. You shall bury me there, and place a cross at my head and another cross at my feet, and the place shall be called Crossness."¹ .

Thus Thorvald died, and his men did everything as he had ordered. Then they went away sadly in search of their comrades, and they related to each other all the news. They remained in their dwelling all the winter, and gathered vines and grapes, and put them on board their ship. Towards spring, they prepared to return to Greenland, where they at length arrived safely with their vessel. On hearing the heavy tidings which they brought, Leif grieved exceedingly, and vowed that neither he nor any of his people should sail into the west again.

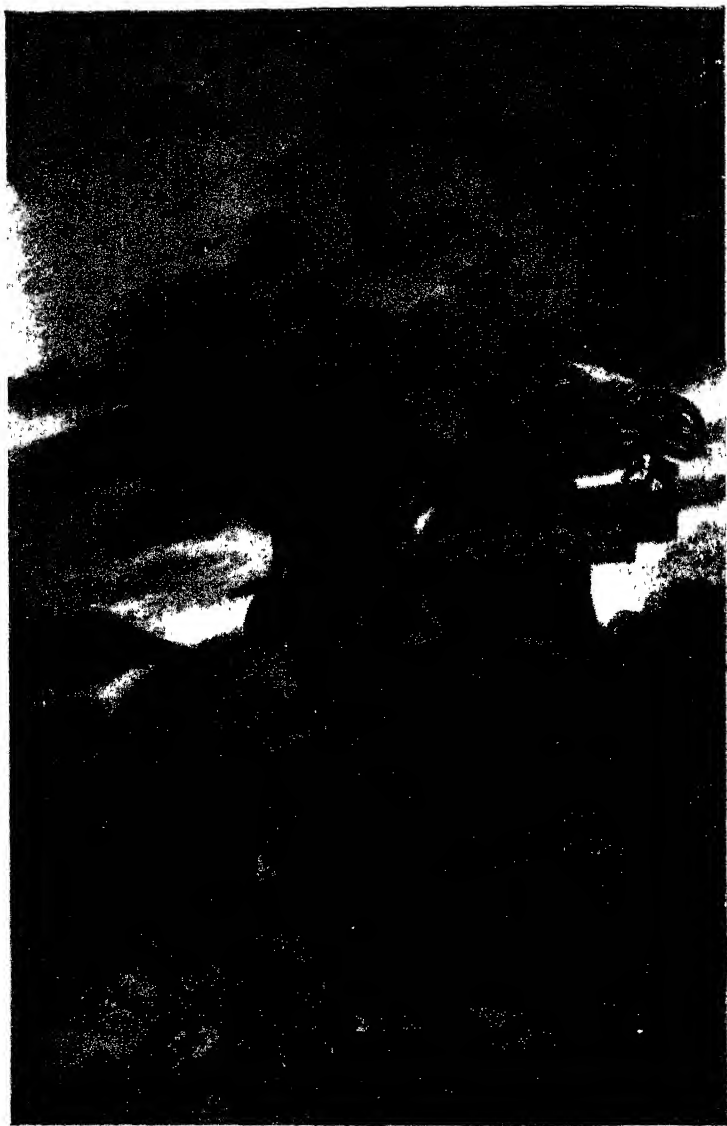
¹ Supposed to be Gurnet Point.

*From the Heimskringla Saga. Translated by
Samuel Laing.*



CHARLEMAGNE was a great and mighty emperor, and the bravest and truest knight that ever lived; but his disposition was proud and haughty, and he was easily moved to wrath. His quick temper sometimes provoked the anger of his unruly vassals, and unhappy little wars would begin, which usually ended in the death or overthrow of the rebellious nobles. Once, however, Charlemagne met his match, and that was in the feud which arose between him and Count Aymon of Dordonne. It happened in this wise—

Count Bevis, Aymon's brother, had served his emperor well and faithfully in a long campaign which had been carried on in Hungary. When the war was brought to an end, Charlemagne proceeded to bestow rewards upon those of his barons who had done him good service, but he gave neither gold nor honours to



"OVER HILL AND DALE. THROUGH FOREST AND STREAM HE FLEW."

[See p. 193.]

Bevis. On this account the latter felt bitterly aggrieved, and openly declared his intention of refusing to do further homage to his sovereign for the fiefs which he held.

Charlemagne was greatly enraged at this, and commanded Count Bevis to appear before his court at Aix, to give an explanation of his rebellious conduct. Thinking that the emperor might set right his grievances, the fearless count journeyed to Aix, where he was brought into the presence of Charlemagne, before whom he laid his complaint that his faithful services had been forgotten.

"No," replied the emperor sternly, "I have forgotten nothing; but I consider that you have wealth and fiefs enough and to spare. Were I to give you more, you would begin to think you were as powerful as Charlemagne himself."

The visage of the count clouded over at these words, and he cried bitterly: "As you refuse to grant me justice, I throw off my allegiance to your crown; and well I know that many a trusty comrade will aid me to fight for the rights which an ungrateful sovereign denies to me."

As he spoke, the warrior laid his hand heavily upon the hilt of his sword, a gesture which so enraged the emperor, that he drew his own blade and smote off the rebel's head, before any of his courtiers could raise a hand in protest. Lords and barons gazed in horror at the deed, and at that moment Count Aymon, the dead man's brother, entered the audience-chamber. When he beheld the body of the murdered man, he spoke not

a word, but, turning on his heel, took to horse, and rode straight to his strong castle.

There he gathered together his friends and retainers; and many nobles of the realm, horrified at the emperor's hasty deed, joined forces with him and took up arms against their liege lord.

Charlemagne sent an army against them, but for a long time no pitched battle took place, for Aymon adopted the plan of delivering sharp and sudden attacks on the flanks of the imperial troops, retreating swiftly before any reprisals could be taken. Thus he gave them no peace, either by night or by day, and they became harassed in mind and utterly wearied out.

This manner of warfare went on for a long time, and Count Aymon struck terror into the hearts of the enemy by the wondrous rapidity of his movements. In the morning he would attack a convoy of provisions at one end of the country, and before nightfall he would appear at the head of his army a hundred miles away. Men began to say that he was a wizard, and that he rode a magic horse gifted with the speed of lightning.

In the latter supposition they were not far wrong, for Aymon possessed indeed a horse, the like of which was not to be found in the world. Bayard was the name of this marvellous steed. Very large and strong was he, and he could run with the speed of the wind. Even more wondrous than his strength and swiftness were his remarkable wit and intelligence, which made him famous throughout the world as the noblest and best of steeds.

One day, when Count Aymon went to take Bayard

from his stall, he discovered that the good steed had disappeared, and no one could say what had become of him. Aymon was in despair, for he knew that, without his wonderful horse, things would go hard with him. Sure enough, from that day nothing prospered with him. His followers were routed by the emperor's army; many of his friends forsook him, and at last he was besieged within his own castle by Charlemagne himself.

The siege went on for some weeks, and Count Aymon was forced to consider the advisability of surrender. Sadly he sat himself down in a solitary chamber, and gave himself up to gloomy reflections.

Suddenly a shrill voice at his shoulder cried: "Good-day to you, my lord." The count looked up and saw before him a strange little dwarf, clad in tight-fitting jerkin and hose, with a cloak fastened about his neck, and a queer, pointed cap on his head. A long grey beard hung almost to his feet, and his twinkling grey eyes were half hidden by his bushy eyebrows.

Aymon sprang up with a cry of joy, for the dwarf was his cousin Malagis, and his firm friend; one, moreover, who was of great service, for he was possessed of more than human power, and was thought to be in all the secrets of the wood-folk and the mountain-elves.

"Malagis!" cried the count, embracing the dwarf. "You are indeed a most welcome sight. You have come to give me your aid, I am sure of it."

"Yes," replied the wizard, with a quizzical smile, "and, from what I observed on my way hither, you seem to stand in sore need of it."

"I do indeed, cousin," replied Aymon sadly. "Since

my faithful Bayard was stolen from me, I have fallen upon evil days."

"Ah!" said the dwarf, "it is just concerning that horse that I have journeyed hither to see you. I have discovered that he has been carried off by Patafrit, King of the Underworld, who has hidden him in Mount Vulcanus, his fiery abode."

"Then all is over with me," cried the count in despair. "I shall never see my beloved steed again."

"Do not give up hope," replied Malagis. "Put your trust in me, and I will bring Bayard back to you in safety. Meanwhile, busy yourself with the defence of your castle, and hold it firmly until my return."

Then, without waiting for a word of thanks, the dwarf turned and left the count. Quickly he made his way through the castle gate and into the lines of Charlemagne's camp, where, before his presence had been noticed, he cast into the air a powerful sleeping-powder. The wind scattered this powder in all directions, and in less than a minute every soldier in the camp was fast asleep; even the most watchful sentinels were forced to close their eyes. Thus Malagis was enabled to pass unchallenged through the ranks of the enemy, and to set off safely on his journey to Mount Vulcanus.

In due time, the little man came in sight of the red flames which issue from the summit of this mountain, and it was not long before he contrived to be brought into the presence of King Patafrit, the terrible King of the Underworld.

"Well!" said that monarch gruffly, "what do you seek of me?"



"That is a question easily answered, your Majesty," replied the dwarf. "The fact is, I am very desirous of entering your service, and as I am a wizard of considerable power, it is likely that I may be of use to you."

"Oh, really!" replied the king coldly. "A good many people come to me with that tale. Still, we will see what you can do. I think I can give you a task that will require all your skill and power."

"Tell me what it is, sire, and I promise you that, however difficult it may be, I shall not hesitate to attempt it."

"You must know then," said Patafrit, "that a short time ago, I began to search for a horse which was worthy to carry me, when I lead my fire-floods into the upper

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world. At last I found one which was just suited to my purpose, and so I took possession of him and brought him hither."

"This must be a wonderful steed," said Malagis, whose eyes twinkled even more than usual, as he listened to the king's words.

"He is indeed," replied Patafrit, "and I thought that when I had such a treasure in my power, I should derive great benefit from him. But directly I attempted to mount him, he kicked and plunged with such extraordinary violence, that I dared not put a leg across his back. So I placed him inside my burning mountain, hoping that imprisonment in a fiery cell would tame his spirit."

"Did this have the desired effect?" asked Malagis.

"No, it did not," replied the king in a tone of vexation. "A month has now gone by, and the only result is that the horse is more ferocious than ever. We will now see if your boasted power has any influence upon him, for indeed his violence is becoming a great anxiety to me."

"Lead him forth, master," cried the dwarf joyfully, "and I warrant I will soon quell his temper. Never yet have I met a horse which I could not master in less than a quarter of an hour."

"You talk boldly," said the king; "we shall see if you are as good as your word." And he sent his imps to fetch the horse from its underground prison. Soon they returned, leading Bayard in chains, and it was only their nimbleness which saved them from being killed by the vicious kicks and bites of the enraged

creature. Malagis approached the horse, scattering as he went his magic sleeping-powder in the air, and in a moment, the lord of the underworld and all his minions were fast asleep.

"Bayard!" cried the dwarf, and at the word the horse stood stock-still, trembling in all his limbs. "Bayard," he went on, "your master stands in sore need of you." At once the terrible steed became as docile as a lamb, and suffered the dwarf to remove his chains and leap upon his back.

"Home, Bayard!" cried Malagis, and immediately the horse sped away more swiftly than a bird can fly. Over hill and dale, through forest and stream he flew, and stopped not once until the walls and turrets of his master's castle came into view.

The wrath of Patafrit, when he awoke and discovered the trick that had been played upon him, was beyond description. He flung his thunderbolts in all directions, and hurled fire and molten rock from his mountain, until the whole neighbourhood was burnt to a cinder, while his terrified imps flew for their lives into the inmost recesses of the underworld.

Meanwhile Count Aymon was hard pressed in his stronghold. Charlemagne had returned to Aix, for he thought his own affairs too important to permit him to waste a whole summer sitting idly before the beleaguered fortress of a vassal. His army, however, under skilled commanders, closely invested the castle, whose defenders soon began to feel the pinch of famine. At length food came to an end, and Aymon gathered together his men, and prepared to make a desperate sally, with the idea of

cutting his way through the besiegers, and making good his escape with the loss of all his possessions.

At the head of his troops, he issued forth from the castle gates, and was just about to charge against the enemy, when suddenly he beheld a horseman galloping swiftly towards him. "Malagis! good Malagis!" he cried, beside himself with joy; "and Bayard, the best and truest of steeds!"

At once the dwarf, for it was he, leapt from the horse, and Aymon sprang into his place. All his courage now returned to him, and he flung himself madly into the battle, where his good sword worked wonders, and his steed fought as bravely as himself. Such was the confidence which the return of Bayard gave both to him and his followers, that the enemy could not resist the vigour of their onslaught, but broke and fled in all directions.

No sooner was the battle over than Count Aymon sought for the dwarf Malagis, to whose assistance he was indebted for the turn in his fortunes; but the little man was nowhere to be found. His work being ended, he quietly disappeared, nor did the count see him again for many a long day. Aymon's evil fortune now left him. His friends and allies flocked back to him, and with their aid he inflicted great losses upon the forces of the emperor.

Charlemagne at length grew weary of this endless warfare, from which he knew that he could derive neither profit nor honour. So at last he sent messengers to Aymon offering to make peace. The count was very glad to listen to them, and bade them carry back the

answer, that he was prepared to return to his allegiance, if the emperor would pay a fine of four times the weight in gold of the murdered Count Bevis, and if he would give his sister Aya in marriage to Aymon, and restore to him all his rights.

Charlemagne at first rejected these terms, but when the war was just about to break out anew, the proud emperor gave way and consented to grant Count Aymon's demands. So peace was at length concluded, and the emperor restored to his vassal all the honours, fiefs and dignities which were his by right, giving him also the Princess Aya as his bride, and paying the fine which had been demanded. The wedding took place soon afterwards, and the newly-married pair settled down to a happy life in the count's ancestral castle.

Good Bayard returned joyfully to his stall, where he was carefully tended every day by the count himself, who would suffer no other hand to touch the silky coat of his favourite. But the horse was not allowed to rest long in peace, for his master's disposition was too active to allow him to remain idly at home. Many strange adventures they passed through together; and after the count's death, the matchless steed bore his four sons to victory.

From Les Quatre Fils Aymon.



ROLAND · THE PALADIN

I. THE TREASON OF GANELON

IN all the world there was no such another monarch as the Emperor Charlemagne. His armies overran Europe, and wherever they marched they conquered. Neither Saracen nor Christian could withstand his power, and his realm stretched from the Baltic to the Pyrenees, from beyond the Rhine to the great ocean on the west.

Nor have there ever lived more famous warriors than the twelve paladins of Charlemagne, all knights of tried valour, who had proved their worth on many a battle-field. Of these, the two most renowned were the noble

Counts Roland and Oliver, and never did there live two more faithful friends. Each was sworn to be true to the other till death, and where one went, the other was always to be found by his side.

Now Charlemagne had crossed the Pyrenees, and waged war for seven full years against Marsilius the Moorish king of Spain. City and keep and castle alike went down before him, until he had won the whole land save only the mountain town of Saragossa, which was still held by the Saracens. So he kept his court in the city of Cordova, while he prepared to attack the last stronghold of Marsilius.

One day the emperor sat in a wide orchard upon a throne of beaten gold. White were his hair and beard, and his aspect was so striking and majestic that none who sought him could mistake him. Around him his knights and cavaliers were amusing themselves by fencing or playing games of skill. Suddenly ten Moorish messengers were brought to him, who bent the knee before him and besought him to give them audience.

"Whence do you come, and what do you want of Charlemagne?" said the emperor.

"We come from Saragossa," said the spokesman of the band, "and we seek for peace. Marsilius, the king, sends you greeting, and begs you to return again to Aix, your city, and to leave in peace this unhappy land of Spain."

"What does Marsilius offer for this peace?" asked Charlemagne.

"If you will withdraw your troops," said the Moor, "Marsilius will come to Aix and be baptised into the

Christian faith; he will put his hands between yours and do you homage, and will swear to hold his realm of Spain in fief from you. Likewise he will place at your feet much of his wealth—bears and lions, and dogs of chase, seven hundred camels, a thousand moulted hawks, and four hundred mules laden with as much gold as they can bear. All this he will do, if you will return to your own land.”

The emperor listened to them carefully, but, never hasty of speech, he informed them that he would send his answer to Marsilius within a few days. Then he dismissed the envoys, ordering that they should be given a sumptuous repast before their departure.

On the morrow, the emperor rose with the dawn, and summoned his paladins and barons to a council of war. It was not long before they appeared before him: Roland and Oliver, Turpin the Archbishop, as good a warrior as he was a priest, Ganelon of Rheims, Ogier the Dane, Count Acelin of Gascony, and many another, until all were assembled about the throne.

Then he told them of the offer of peace made by Marsilius. “This pagan’s promises are fair enough,” said he, “but I know not what may lie in his heart. What think you, my lords and barons?”

Scarcely had he finished, when Roland leapt to his feet and cried: “Put no faith in Marsilius, sire; he has always played the traitor. Once before he sent the same message as this, and when we dispatched two noble messengers with our reply he smote off their heads. I am for war, if only to avenge the knights whom this false pagan slew.”

The emperor made no reply, but twisted his beard with his fingers, as he reflected upon the vast treasures promised him by the Moorish king.

Then Ganelon sprang up and cried haughtily : "Since Marsilius promises to be henceforth your vassal, and to hold his realm in fief from you, why should you deny him this treaty? He who advises you otherwise cares not what death we may die."

Then Count Namon upraised his aged form and said : "Wise are the words of Ganelon. King Marsilius is beaten and broken in war. It would be an unknighly deed to crush him when he surrenders and sues for peace. Let him give hostages as a sign of his good faith, and let a Christian knight be sent to bring them from his city. It is time that this war came to an end."

"Well spoken!" cried all the barons save Roland and Oliver. "Let us make an end of the war."

"So be it," said Charlemagne; "but whom shall we send to Saragossa to take an answer and bring back hostages?"

A dispute at once arose amongst those around the throne as to which of them should undertake the dangerous task.

"I will go," cried Roland.

"No," said Oliver, "you are too fiery, and would only run into danger. I will go, if it so please the emperor."

Turpin the Archbishop also offered to act as envoy, but Charlemagne refused all three. He did not care to risk the loss of such knights upon so perilous an enterprise. "None of my paladins shall go upon this



errand," he cried. "Choose some one from among my faithful barons."

"Then send Ganelon," said Roland; "you would look in vain for a man more fit to act as your messenger."

"Yes, Ganelon," cried all the Franks; "he is indeed worthy of the trust."

Ganelon was no friend to Roland, and at this suggestion he arose wrathfully, and cried to the paladin: "Madman, you think by suggesting me as envoy that you are sending me to my doom. If only I am spared to return, I will work evil upon you for this."

"Proud lord," said Roland, "do you think to frighten me by threats? If you fear to go, I will go in your stead."

"Never!" cried Ganelon. "If the emperor commands me to go, I will ride forth to Saragossa, though it is probable that I shall never return."

So saying, he took leave of the emperor, and, mounting his charger, set off towards Saragossa.

When Ganelon reached the Saracen's city, he was led before Marsilius, who sat upon his throne in the shade of a pine-tree. "Speak," said the king, "what message have you from noble Charlemagne?"

Now Ganelon was evil-minded, and, seeking how he might bring harm to Roland, of whose fame and power he was so envious, he had determined to deliver a false message to Marsilius. So he said: "The emperor will give you peace, on condition that you are baptised a Christian; but he will grant you only the half of Spain to hold in fief; the other half he intends to give to the Count Roland. If you refuse these terms, he will send you in chains to Aix, there to die a death of shame."

At this discourteous message, Marsilius turned pale with rage, and he grasped his javelin as if to hurl it straight at Ganelon's heart. But he overcame his fury, and, seeing that it would bring certain ruin upon himself if he slew Charlemagne's envoy, he determined to try and win him to his side.

"Fair Sir Ganelon," he said, "I did a rash thing in raising hand against you. But I will richly atone for the wrong. Here are four hundred pounds of gold which shall be yours before you leave me. Now tell me, when do you think that Charlemagne will grow weary of war and strife?"

"Not so long as Roland is alive," replied Ganelon.

"Then there is also Oliver, his comrade, besides the other great paladins, of whom the emperor is so proud."

"Speak, then," said the king, "and tell me how this Roland may be brought to death. I should be glad to see him slain. If you can show me how it may be done, I will give you ten mules laden with the finest gold of Araby, and every year as long as you live a similar treasure shall be sent to you."

Nothing was more pleasing to Ganelon than the opportunity of bringing Roland to his death. So he made reply: "I will tell you how Roland may be slain. Send to the Emperor Charlemagne the treasure that you promised, also twenty hostages as a proof of your faith. He will then march off to France with all his troops, but his rearguard of twenty thousand men, commanded by Roland and Oliver, will linger far behind the rest of the army. If you fall upon them as they guard the passes of the Pyrenees, with at least a hundred thousand of your Moors, Roland must indeed be overcome at last."

The false-hearted traitor then gave pledges to Marsilius that he would keep faith with him, and returned to Cordova with the treasure for Charlemagne, and the keys of the city of Saragossa. He told the emperor that the treaty of peace had been concluded, and that the Moorish king would do all that he had promised. At this news, the aged monarch gave thanks to God, and commanded that his army should set off on the next day for gentle France.

By sunrise the great host was on its way, each man rejoicing that the long war in the rugged land of Spain was at last over. With sounding trumpets and flutter-



"TEN MOORISH MESSENGERS WERE BROUGHT TO HIM."

[See p. 197]

ing banners, the long steel-clad lines passed through the dark defiles of the mountains, while Roland, with all the paladins of Charlemagne and twenty thousand horsemen, remained behind to guard the rear of the host until it had crossed in safety.

Little did those heroes think that four hundred thousand Moors were riding in the Christians' track, with lances poised and helmets laced and bucklers swinging from the shoulder. Over the steep slopes of the mountain they came, until they reached a forest, in which they concealed themselves to await the morning light.

II. FAMOUS RONCESVALLES

High and steep were the mountains, deep and dark the valleys; and the Frankish army wound its way through the distant passes, while Roland with his twenty thousand men guarded the rear. Oliver climbed a high peak to look back into Spain, and, gazing through a valley which stretched to the right, he saw, to his astonishment, the vast array of the Saracens, whose helmets and spear-points were gleaming in the morning sunshine.

With all speed he hastened down to the Franks and cried: "The Saracens are upon us, and such a host never did on earth appear. They are advancing in their hundreds of thousands, with shields and hauberks in serried rows, and their tall lances erect and shining. This must be Ganelon's doing. The false traitor! Why did we trust him?"

When Roland heard the news he said: "Such a battle

awaits us as we have never fought before. God grant that we may not be vanquished this day !”

And his warriors cried : “Shame upon him who fears to die !”

Oliver, however, turned to Roland and said : “The heathens are coming in overwhelming force. I pray you, comrade, sound upon your ivory horn. The emperor will hear the blast, and will send back his legions to our succour.”

“God forbear that I should do such an unknighly deed !” cried Roland. “It shall never be said of me that I blew a single blast for fear of a heathen foe. This good sword of mine, Durendal, shall bite deep to-day, and the Saracens will fall before us like corn before the sickle.”

Again and again Oliver urged his comrade to sound his horn, for he saw plainly that the small rear-guard could not hope to overcome the countless swarms of the foe. But Roland was obdurate. “I will not bring such shame,” he cried, “upon my race and lineage. Say no more, my friend and comrade. The emperor left us, his bravest, here, and he puts his faith and trust in our courage. Do you strike out with your good lance-point, while I will wield my blade Durendal, which the emperor himself gave to me. Death is better than dishonour. Foot to foot we will hold this place, and drive back the pagan traitors.”

The Archbishop Turpin now spurred his steed to an eminence, and cried to the host : “Comrades, we are here for our monarch’s sake. We must hold the pass, even though we come to our death. Let every man kneel

and pray to Heaven; then, if we die, ours will be a martyr's glorious death."

At once every man leapt from his horse, and reverently knelt upon the ground, while the good archbishop blessed the host in the name of Heaven. Then each warrior sprang upon his steed, and drew up in line of battle in the place that is called Roncesvalles (the Vale of Thorns). At their head rode Roland, the sunshine gleaming upon his armour, and upon the snow-white pennon which fluttered from his lance. Gallantly he faced the Moorish ranks; then, setting spurs to his horse, he cried to his men: "Press onwards and strike your best. To-day we shall win everlasting glory."

And Oliver cried: "Comrades, do not forget the war-cry of Charlemagne." At once the rugged mountains resounded with the cry: "Montjoie! Montjoie!" and the whole host, setting spurs to their horses, charged straight at the ranks of the foe.

A haughty and richly-dressed champion rode out to meet them, taunting them with scornful words. It was the nephew of King Marsilius, and one of the greatest warriors of the Moors; but his strength did not avail him now, for Roland spurred on his charger, and drove his lance through buckler and breast-plate, until it pierced the heart of the boaster, who fell lifeless from his horse.

"Strike on, my barons!" cried the victor, dropping his lance and seizing his sword Durendal. "The first blow in this fight is ours!"

In a moment the two hosts met with a clash and a ring of arms. Wild and fierce was the battle, and great

the slaughter. Thousands of the Moors were slain, but at the cost of many good Frankish lives. Wondrous were the deeds of valour performed by Roland and Oliver and all the paladins of Charlemagne. At one time it appeared as if the Franks had won the battle, for the pagans turned in flight from the field; but at that moment, King Marsilius came up with twenty battalions of fresh troops. The Frankish host, sadly lessened in number, was now ringed about with foes, and one by one the barons fell, until of the proud force which had ridden out so hopefully that morning only sixty horsemen remained.

Roland gazed in dismay on his slaughtered men, and cried to his comrade Oliver: "Dear friend, well may we weep for fair France. Behold how the bravest of her warriors lie dead on the field. Tell me, good comrade, how can we send tidings of this to Charlemagne?"

"I know not," answered Oliver. "Death is better now than shame."

Then said Roland: "I will blow upon my horn. Perchance the emperor, as he passes through the gorge, will hear, and come to our relief."

"It is useless now," replied Oliver. "You would not deign to do so when I advised it. If the emperor hears you now, he will return only to find us all dead upon the field."

"What matters that?" said Turpin, who stood close by. "He can drive back the foe, and his men can carry us home to be buried, instead of leaving us upon the ground to be the food of wolves and bears."

"It is good," replied Roland; and, placing the horn

to his lips, he blew upon it such a mighty blast that the mountain peaks shook with the sound.

Thirty leagues away, Charlemagne heard the music of that horn. "Our men are hard pressed in battle," he said.

Ganelon tried to persuade him that this could not be true, and urged that Roland was too proud to seek assistance. But at that moment the sound of the horn came again, borne faintly on the breeze; and the emperor immediately ordered the alarm to be sounded, and the whole of the great army to return.

Ganelon tried again to dissuade him, but Charlemagne, losing patience with him, ordered the traitor to be bound, and given over to the custody of the kitchen men, by whom he was soundly beaten.

Meanwhile Roland and his sixty horsemen still held the field, though they were hard beset by a great band of Ethiopian warriors. One by one fell knights and paladins, and at length Count Oliver was wounded to the death. "Alas! gentle friend," said Roland, as he saw his comrade dying. "How shall I live without you, the best and truest knight that ever wielded sword?" But the anguish of his wound drove Oliver to madness. Not knowing what he did, he brought his sword down with mighty force upon Roland's head, and clove his helmet even to the nose-piece, though he wounded him not.

"Comrade," said Roland gently, "you know not what you do. I am Roland, who loves you so dearly."

Oliver turned ashen-pale and slid from his horse to the ground, murmuring: "I can hear you speak, but I



"Oliver turned ashen-pale, and slid from his horse to the ground."

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cannot see. Have I struck you, brother? Forgive me. God's blessing upon my king, my country, and upon you, dear Roland." So Count Oliver passed away, and Roland was left to weep alone.

The battle continued until all the Franks were slain save Roland and the brave Turpin, and four hundred of the enemy prepared to make a final effort to overcome them. The archbishop had just time to bestow his blessing upon the fallen paladins, when the onslaught commenced, and he was the first to be struck from his charger.

Roland still fought on nobly, though he was sorely wounded. He yearned to know if the emperor were coming, and, lifting his horn to his lips again, he blew a feeble blast. At once the sound of the answering trumpets was heard in the distance, and the remnants of the Moorish army turned and fled in dismay.

But Roland's strength was sped, and he knew that death was not far from him. Taking his blade Durendal in his hand, he dashed it against a rock, for he did not wish the good sword to fall into other hands. But, for all his strength, the blade held firm, though the rock was shattered in twain. Ten times did he smite the rock, but he could not break the steel, nor even dent its wondrous edge.

Finding his efforts in vain, he laid the sword upon the ground beneath a lofty pine, and by it he placed his ivory horn, and then, knowing that death was upon him, he threw himself down with his face towards the foe, that all men might know he died a conqueror. With his last breath he asked pardon for his sins, and

commended his soul to Heaven. Thus great Roland passed away, the bravest and noblest knight of gentle France.

When Charlemagne with his great host reached the plain of death, he broke into bitter lamentations to see his heroes lying slain. Pursuing the remnant of the Moorish host, he utterly destroyed it, and then returned to the Vale of Thorns, to search for the bodies of his dead paladins.

Roland he found beneath the pine-tree, with his sword and horn by his side. The emperor took him up in his arms and wept. "My friend, my Roland," he cried, "God guard your soul. Never on earth has there been such a knight. My pride and glory, alas! are gone, and I am left without a champion of my honour. So great is my pain, I would not live without you, and pray that my spirit may be taken with yours."

Sadly the Franks raised their sorrowing emperor, and buried their dead upon the field of battle. But they placed the bodies of Roland, Oliver and Turpin upon biers, each covered with a silken coverlet, and conveyed them to Blaive, where they were buried in tombs of white marble in the shrine of St. Romanus.

So the vengeance of Ganelon was complete, but the false traitor did not escape the just punishment of his misdeeds, and after enduring his trial in the city of Aix, he was put to a terrible death.

From the Chanson de Roland.

OLINDO AND SOPHRONIA



Not only men followed the pursuit of arms in the brave days of old. Women also feared not to don steel armour, and to seek fame and renown in the turmoil of the battle-field. Such a one was Clorinda, who figures in the following story. She was a Saracen princess, who from childhood had loved all feats of arms, and had disdained to put her hand to the needle and the distaff.

While yet a child, her small right hand could control the bit of the charger, and she wielded the sword and spear, and hardened her limbs with wrestling, and made them supple for the race. Then, as she grew up, she tracked the footsteps of the bear and lion, and followed the trumpet to the wars, where she was justly famed as

much for her skill and courage as for her generosity towards friend and foe.

In the days when Clorinda waged war against the Christians, Godfrey of Boulogne, the leader of the Crusaders, was in full march with his army against Jerusalem. Saladin, the Saracen king of Jerusalem, became agitated with wrath and terror at the accounts he heard of the enemy's irresistible advance. There were within his walls many Christians whose insurrection he dreaded, and he longed to stifle his fears by a massacre, but was afraid of the consequences in the event of the capture of his city.

At this juncture, a certain evil magician named Ismeno told the king, that in the church belonging to his Christian subjects there was an altar underground, on which stood an image that they worshipped. "If this image," said he, "is taken away by the king's own hand, and set up in a mosque, such a spell of enchantment can be thrown about it as to make this city impregnable."

Saladin proceeded instantly to the Christian temple, and, treating the priests with violence, tore the image from its shrine, and conveyed it to his own place of worship, where the magician muttered before it his words of enchantment. But when morning came, the image had vanished. It was never found again, nor is it known to this day how it went.

The king, who fell into a rage, had no doubt that it had been taken by some Christian, and at once issued a proclamation setting a price on the head of any one who concealed it. As no discovery ensued, Saladin gave orders that, unless the offender came forward, a general Christian massacre should take place.

The Christians heard the order with an astonishment that took away all their powers of resistance. The suddenness of the presence of death stupefied them, and, without resorting even to an entreaty, they waited, like sheep, to be butchered. Little did they think, however, what kind of saviour was at hand.

There was a maiden among them named Sophronia, who, though possessed of rare beauty, did not value the gift, but was altogether absorbed in high and holy thoughts. A Christian youth, by name Olindo, would have given the world to make her his bride, but he did not dare to mention this to her, for she would not bestow upon him so much as a look.

This maiden, who was nevertheless as generous as she was virtuous, fell into deep thought how she might save her Christian brethren. She soon came to her resolve, and going straight to the king, she said to him: "I am come to beg that you will suspend your wrath, and withhold the orders given to your people. If you will do so, I will give up to you the author of the deed which has offended you."

"Say on," replied the king, "and I will grant you what you ask."

"Behold, then," said she, "I am the offender. The deed was the work of this hand, and I am the criminal to be punished."

As she spoke this falsehood, she bowed her head with shame. She thought little of the young life which she was prepared to sacrifice to save her fellow-creatures from massacre, but her heart was much troubled by the untrue statement which she had been forced to make.

The king was exceedingly astonished to learn that

this frail girl was the culprit. He looked at her in doubt and said: "Who advised you to do this? Who was your accomplice?"

"Not a soul," replied the maiden. "I would not have permitted another person to share the glory. I alone knew of the deed, and I alone did it."

"Then be the consequence," cried the king, "on your own head."

"It is but just," answered Sophronia. "Mine was the sole honour; mine, therefore, should be the sole punishment."

At these bold words the tyrant grew angry. "Where," said he, "have you hidden the image?"

"I did not hide it," she replied, "I burnt it, for I knew of no other way to save it from the hands of infidels. Therefore ask not for what will never again be found, and rest content with the vengeance you have before you."

"Rash girl," cried the wrathful monarch, "you shall bitterly repent your bold deed. Ho, guards! away with her to the market-place, and let her be instantly burnt alive at the stake."

The cruel command was at once obeyed, and the maiden was soon bound fast to the stake, while faggots were quickly piled around her. Yet she was not terrified, though the approach of death robbed her cheeks of their colour.

The news spread in an instant, and the city crowded to the sight, Christians and all, Olindo amongst them. The dreadful thought had come to him, "What if it should be Sophronia!" And when he beheld that it was she indeed, and not only condemned but already

at the stake, he pushed violently through the crowd, and cried aloud: "Stop! stop! This maiden is as innocent as the day. She has neither the strength nor the courage to carry away a sacred image. I am the guilty one, and I cannot let an innocent person suffer in my place. Release the girl, and bind me to the stake."

Sophonria looked up, and gazed at the youth with looks of pity. "What madness is this?" she exclaimed. "What can induce an innocent person to bring destruction on himself for nothing? Trust me, you are mistaken. I stand in no need of your help or company."

This contest irritated the king, and he cried: "Let them both be taken at their words. Since both long for death, let them both have the prize which they so ardently desire."

At once the guards fell upon Olindo, and bound him to the stake in such a fashion that he and the maiden were set back to back. Then the wood was heaped round them, and the fire was kindled.

Olindo broke out into lamentations, but only loud enough to be heard by his fellow-sufferer. "Long have I desired," he cried, "to make you my bride, but little did I think that death would unite us. It is not for myself that I grieve, for I gladly share your death; but your cruel fate sorely afflicts me, and tortures my sorrowing heart."

Hearing his words, Sophronia gently reproved him, saying: "Other thoughts, my friend, and other lamentations befit a time like this. Think not of me, but rather of your sins, and of the rewards that have been promised to the righteous."

The flames were now beginning to approach the stake,



and the end of the martyrs was close at hand, when just at that moment, there appeared, pressing through the crowd, a mounted warrior of noble appearance, clad in the arms of a strange country. On his helmet he wore, as crest, a silver tiger, which the Saracens no sooner beheld than they broke out into glad shouts and acclamations. "Clorinda! Clorinda!" they cried, pressing round the warrior-maiden, for it was indeed that famous heroine, who had just arrived from Persia to take up arms against the Christians.

She spurred on her horse through the people, who gave way before her, and she halted as she entered the circle of guards around the stake, and sat gazing on the youth and the maiden. She wondered to see the male victim lamenting, while the female was mute, but she

soon perceived that he wept, not out of grief for himself, but pity for his companion. The heart of the Amazon was touched, and tears came into her eyes. Turning to one of the guards who stood beside her, she said: "What is this? Who are these two persons, whom crime or their ill-fortune has brought hither?"

The man answered her briefly, but to the purpose, and she discerned at once that both of the victims must be innocent. Instantly she made up her mind to save them, and, dismounting from her steed, she began to quench the flames, an example which was quickly followed by the crowd. Then she said to the officers: "Let no one continue this work, until I have spoken to the king. Rest assured that he will hold you guiltless of the delay."

The officers obeyed, for they knew well the power and authority of this steel-clad damsel. Then she went straight to the king, and said to him: "Do you know me? I am Clorinda, and I have come from a distant land to defend the good faith and the King of Jerusalem. I am ready for any duty that may be assigned to me. Open field or walled city, no post will come amiss to the king's servant."

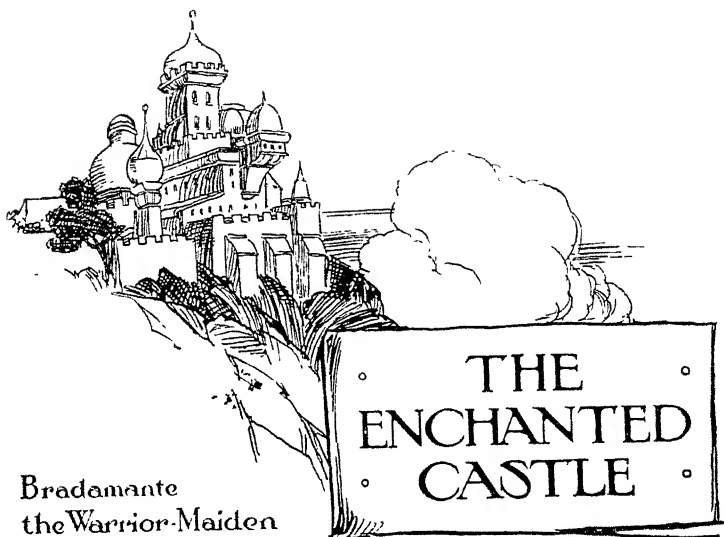
"Illustrious maiden," answered the king, "who is there that knows not Clorinda? What region is there to which the sound of your achievements has not arrived? Joined by you and your good sword, I fear nothing, and care not how soon I am attacked by Godfrey of Boulogne. Do you ask to which post you shall be appointed? To the greatest, for none else befits you. You shall be mistress of the war and commander of my host."

Clorinda gave thanks to the king for his courtesy, and then continued: "Strange is it, in truth, to ask for a reward before I have earned it, but confidence like this reassures me. Grant me the lives of the two persons bound to the stake. I am sure that they are innocent of the crime for which they have been condemned, and I ask for their liberation as a favour."

The warlike damsel was silent, and the king, though he could with difficulty conquer his anger, yet did so to please his guest. "They are free," said he; "I can deny nothing to such a petitioner. Whether it be justice or not to release them, I know not, but released they are. If they are innocent, I pronounce them so; if guilty, I grant them my pardon."

At these words, the youth and the maiden were set free, and at once they fell upon their knees before the noble Clorinda, and thanked her with tears of gratitude in their eyes. Out of their pain and sorrow great happiness came to them; for Sophronia had realised, even when bound to the stake, the noble nature of the youth, who had been ready and eager to give his life for hers. She no longer looked upon him with disfavour, and shortly afterwards they were quietly married in the little Christian church in Jerusalem. When the city was overcome by the brave troops of Godfrey of Boulogne, Olindo and his bride returned to their native land, where they spent the rest of their days in the greatest happiness and prosperity.

*From Tasso's "Gerusalemme Liberata." Told by
Leigh Hunt.*



IN the days of the Emperor Charlemagne, there lived in the north of Spain a Moorish wizard named Atlantes, who of all sorcerers was the wisest and the cleverest. He was a lonely old man, much given to solitary study and reflection, and he lived all by himself in a gloomy cave hidden away amongst the gorges of the lofty Pyrenees. In this wild and rugged place he passed his days, reading in his books of fate and practising his magic art.

Of all mankind he loved but one, and that was his little nephew Roger, a Moorish prince, who had been left an orphan at a tender age. He lavished upon this child all the affection of which his withered old heart was capable, and many were the amusements which he created to please the little prince.

One day, when he was consulting his magical books, he read therein, to his horror and consternation, that the boy was destined to leave his home and those who loved him, and to seek adventures in the ranks of the Christians. So great was the wizard's agony and grief at the prospect of losing his beloved nephew, that he groaned aloud, and clenched his hands until the nails cut into his flesh.

"This shall not be," he muttered. "It is not for nothing that I have made myself a master of the magic arts. I will fight against the Fates with all my power and all my knowledge, and we shall see who will win the day."

Then, in a single night, he built a stronghold of shining steel upon the summit of a lofty and precipitous cliff. Its burnished walls and glittering turrets seemed to form part of the rocky eminence on which they were placed, and frowned down upon the steep sides of the cliff, around the base of which a river surged and swirled. There was no approach to this great fortress save a narrow path, scarce wide enough for one man to ride in safety, and so slippery that few would care to risk their lives upon its surface.

Atlantes adorned this mountain fortress with all the beautiful things that his fancy could imagine, and then conveyed to it his nephew Roger, providing him with a vast retinue of men-at-arms and servants, with wise men to give him knowledge, and sweet-voiced minstrels to sing to him the songs of chivalry. In this lofty stronghold the little prince spent his childhood, without a playmate, without a comrade. Small wonder that he

often gazed wistfully over the battlements at the great world that lay around, and longed for the day when he could sally forth from those grim walls and seek adventures in fresh green meadows and shady woods.

As the boy grew to manhood, the wizard realised the need for companions of his own rank, and so he enticed into the castle the bravest knights and fairest ladies of all parts of the world. There they were kept close prisoners, though in truth their life was pleasant enough, save for their lack of liberty, for there was no end to the feasts, masques and pleasantries which Atlantes provided for the amusement of his nephew and his enforced guests.

When the most famous lords and ladies of Christendom disappeared one by one from the sight of men, many evil rumours were spread abroad concerning the mysterious castle in the Pyrenees; and when at last even Roland, the chief paladin of Charlemagne, suddenly vanished from the earth, the Christian heroes banded themselves together to overcome the wizard and set free his prisoners. All their efforts, however, came to naught, for strength and bravery count for little in the face of magic. Many were slain, and others went to swell the number of the sorcerer's captives.

Amongst those whose indignation was fired by the ill-treatment of so many noble persons, was a certain maiden named Bradamante of Montalbano. Like Clorinda the Saracen, Bradamante had, from childhood, accustomed herself to manly sports and feats of arms. At jousts and tournaments she always took the foremost place, and few were the knights whose skill and

courage could equal those of this redoubtable warrior-maiden.

When tidings were brought to Bradamante concerning the doings of Atlantes and the plight of his captives, she determined to take up arms and do battle in their cause. So she put on her armour, and taking her weapons of war, she rode forth on her milk-white charger. A right noble figure she looked as she rode through the leafy woodlands. Her armour was as white as snow, and from her helmet waved a snow-white plume. A white mantle tipped with fur fell from her shoulders, and a broad silver belt encircled her waist, and sustained the weight of the great broadsword which she knew so well how to use. At her back hung her white shield emblazoned with the arms of Montalbano.

Thus accoutred, she made her way across the rich plain of Lombardy, and plunged into the forests which clothe the mountains around it. As she threaded her way through the defiles, she came upon a pleasant valley, watered by a stream and shaded by large trees. At the river's brink she espied a knight sitting in an attitude of the deepest dejection. His helmet and shield lay by his side, and his head was buried in his hands, while his horse quietly cropped the luxuriant grass on the river bank.

"Sir knight," said Bradamante, riding up to him, "you seem very sorrowful. Pray tell me the cause of your grief, for perchance I may be able to help you."

"Fair sir," replied the knight, "my name is Pinabel, and in me you behold the most wretched of men. Only a week ago, I was leading a troop of horsemen to the

court of the Emperor Charlemagne, and with me was a gentle lady whom I hoped to make my bride. Suddenly, as we rode along, we saw in the air a raven-black horse with outspread wings, and on his back sat a man clad in black armour, whose closed vizor hid his face from our view. With the speed of lightning, he swooped down upon our cavalcade, and before one of us could raise a hand, he seized my lady in his arms and bore her off through the air."

"Did you discover whither she had been taken?" asked Bradamante.

"I did," replied the knight. "Leaving my men to continue their journey alone, I rode off in the direction in which the robber had vanished, and in three days I came to the rugged slopes of the Pyrenees. On the fourth day, I reached a rocky valley, in the midst of which stood a great castle of shining steel, whose walls dazzled my eyes. Then I realised that my lady was in the power of that Moorish magician, who has seized so many Christian knights and damsels."

"Did you make no effort to release her?" asked Bradamante.

"Yes," replied Pinabel. "Time after time I attempted to scale the slippery path that leads to the castle gate, but I failed again and again. At length, worn out with grief and fatigue, I rode away until I reached this valley, where I have since remained, overcome by despair; for this magician is so powerful that no one may vanquish him."

Bradamante had listened to the knight's story with great interest, and when he came to an end, she said:



"Lead me at once, I pray you, to the enchanted castle, for I have sworn to take no rest until I have overcome the wizard and have freed his captives."

"That I will gladly do," replied Pinabel, "but I have little hope that your enterprise will be successful, for no man can hope to stand against the power of this sorcerer and his flying horse. Still, if you are determined to try your strength against him, I am ready to do your bidding."

Then the knight mounted his steed, and the two set forth together. But as they rode, evil thoughts came into Pinabel's heart; for, in spite of his fair words, he was a false and treacherous knight, and unworthy of the trust of man or maid. He had recognised the arms of

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Montalbano emblazoned on the shield of Bradamante; and so envious was he of the maiden's fame and honour, that all gratitude for her generosity forsook him, and he thought only of how he might bring her to her death.

He knew well that he could not hope to overcome the valiant damsel by force of arms, so he meditated how he might destroy her by treachery; yet for the present he could see no means of accomplishing his design. So they rode on together through a great forest, until they came to the foot of a mountain, which they began to cross. Rocky peaks surrounded them on all sides, and they had to ride with great caution, in order to avoid the numerous chasms and clefts that yawned in their path.

At length Pinabel observed an exceedingly dark chasm, with sides so steep and smooth that no mortal could hope to scale them. His heart leapt at the sight, for he thought that he now saw his way clear to destroy Bradamante.

"Fair knight," said he, still pretending that he did not know the maiden, "as I passed this chasm some few days ago, I saw at the bottom a beautiful damsel, dressed like a princess, who was trying to clamber up the steep walls. Even as I watched, a fierce ruffian issued from an inner cave, and dragged her roughly in with him, in spite of her piteous cries for mercy."

"If this is so," said Bradamante, "then it would be a shame to pass the place without making an attempt to succour the damsel. Come, I will cut down a young tree, and you shall hold one end while I descend by it into the pit."

So saying, she immediately set herself to hew down a young pine which grew near by, and having cut off its branches, she lowered it into the chasm, leaving one end in the hands of Pinabel. Then she sheathed her sword, and began to lower herself down this rough ladder, without stopping to ascertain whether it reached the bottom of the pit or not.

She had not proceeded far, when the treacherous Pinabel let the end slip from his hands; and the maiden plunged down to the bottom of the chasm, while the false knight mounted his horse and rode upon his way, rejoicing at the success of his wicked plan.

II. THE TOMB OF MERLIN

Deep as the chasm was, Bradamante did not meet her death by her fall. The young pine-tree fell beneath her, and prevented her from being dashed upon the rocky floor; but she was badly bruised and shaken, and lay for some hours as if she were dead. When at length she recovered consciousness, she looked around her, and saw to her surprise that Pinabel had unwittingly spoken truth in one respect. There really was an inner cave at the bottom of the chasm, for she could see before her the door which led to it, and which stood wide open as if inviting her to enter.

Rising painfully to her feet, she passed through the narrow doorway, and found herself in a vast cavern hewn out of the solid rock. Its shape was that of a great cathedral, with mighty pillars of alabaster supporting the vaulted roof. In the centre stood an altar of black

marble, above which hung a lamp of solid gold, with a flame so brilliant that it illuminated the whole of the great church, and even penetrated into the misty recesses of the roof.

As Bradamante gazed around her in bewilderment, a small door opened, and a beautiful lady issued forth, bare-footed and with long black hair bound with a golden clasp.

"Welcome! Bradamante," she said, "we have long awaited your coming. It is no mere chance which brings you hither, for this was foretold many years before your birth."

"Who are you?" asked Bradamante in amazement, "and what is this strange temple in which I find myself?"

"I am Melissa, the enchantress," replied the lady, "your good friend and the guardian of your destinies. And this temple is the living tomb of Merlin, the great wizard, which he made for himself in a night and a day, when he learnt that he was to be cast into an eternal trance. Here he sleeps from age to age, but life is still within him, and his voice answers those who consult him as to their fate. For this purpose I came here some weeks ago, and he bade me await your coming and aid you in your enterprise. Come with me, and you shall hear for yourself the voice of Merlin the Wise."

With these words, Melissa led the maiden into a small chapel which adjoined the main building. In the middle, lay a splendid tomb of the finest marble, set with jasper, agate and other precious stones. The floor of the chapel was paved with massy gold, and the walls were hung

with priceless tapestries. A window, cunningly contrived in one of the walls, let in a flood of rosy light, which shed a soft glow over the whole scene.

Bradamante stood motionless at the entrance of this wonderful shrine; and a voice, strong and majestic, issued from the tomb.

"Hail! Bradamante, daughter of a proud and noble race. Take courage, for a glorious future lies before you. Neither the guile of the traitor nor the magic of the enchanter shall prevail over you, and out of many hardships and perils, great joy shall in the end be yours."

The voice died away, and in silence Melissa led the maiden out of the little chapel and back to the great cave, where she placed food and drink before her, saying: "After breaking your fast, you must sleep. In the dawn, I will show you how to reach the Moorish wizard's castle, and will place within your grasp the means to overcome his enchantments and deliver his captives."

The two ladies slept soundly all night; and at the first break of day, the enchantress awoke her companion, and conducted her through a secret passage, which led into a narrow glen between two lofty and forbidding precipices.

All day they travelled painfully along, picking their way between great boulders and dangerous clefts; now clambering up rugged cliffs, and now leaping from stone to stone across rushing torrents. As they went, Melissa talked with Bradamante concerning the perilous adventure that lay before her.

"No human power," she said, "can overcome the arts

of the great magician, who holds captive the bravest knights and fairest ladies of Christendom. His castle is of solid steel, and too strong to be taken by the combined armies of the whole world. His winged horse has the speed of the four winds, and, above all, his bright shield has such power that the very sight of it strikes senseless all who stand before it."

The hopes of Bradamante would have been dashed to the ground at these words, but she remembered Merlin's prophecy and said: "Pray tell me, good Melissa, how I may outwit the sorcerer and overcome his enchantments."

"In order to do this," replied Melissa, "you will require a certain magic ring, which renders its wearer proof against all enchantments. It was formerly in the possession of Agramante, King of Africa, but has lately been stolen from him by a rascally thief named Brunello, who, for his evil deeds, should have swung upon the gallows years ago."

"How may I gain possession of this ring?" asked Bradamante.

Melissa thought for a moment, and then replied: "You must contrive that for yourself, or the glory of delivering the magician's prisoners will not be entirely yours. At the end of this valley I am going to leave you, for there you will find a good and easy path, which will lead you to a rustic inn. Seated on a bench before the inn you will see Brunello, whom you will easily recognise by his dwarfish stature and hideous features. You must make his acquaintance, and obtain the ring from him by any means which lie in your power. But

beware lest he detect your purpose and play you some evil trick."

By this time they had reached the woodland path which Melissa had indicated, and there Bradamante, with many expressions of gratitude, bade farewell to her kindly protector, and continued on her way alone.

On she walked, until the shades of evening began to fall, and then she reached the little wayside inn which Melissa had mentioned, and before which she now saw sitting the ugliest specimen of humanity that can possibly be imagined. He was a hideous dwarf, hunch-backed and misshapen, with long, pendulous ears and a flat, crooked nose. His expression was so indescribably evil that Bradamante could not help shuddering at it, and she said to herself: "This must surely be Brunello the thief, for there cannot be such another monster in the world."

Then she sat down beside him, and began to talk with him concerning wizards and witches and knightly deeds, noticing with joy that upon one of his fingers he wore the magic ring, a broad circlet of gold with a dull red ruby in the centre. At last she led the conversation to the wizard Atlantes and his steel castle in the Pyrenees.

"Would that I could find a guide to lead me to this castle," said she, "for I have vowed to overthrow the magician to whom it belongs, and to set free his captives."

Brunello pricked up his ears at this, for he thought that Bradamante would fall an easy prey to Atlantes, and that he could then make off in safety with all her possessions. So he assumed as pleasant an expression



as he could, though that was hideous enough, and said :
“May it please your honour, I myself will serve you as
guide. I know every path in the Pyrenees, and will
gladly lead you to the enchanter’s castle.”

The warrior-maiden thanked him kindly, rejoicing in
her heart to think that her plan had so far succeeded,
and that she would soon have the dwarf in her power.
The two began at once to prepare for their journey, and
Bradamante bought from the innkeeper a fine black
palfrey, to replace the steed which had been taken by
the false knight Pinabel.

Mounted on this horse, which was a sure-footed
animal, accustomed to rough mountainous paths, Brada-
mante set off, clad in her white armour, with her lance

by her side, and her great sword girt to her waist; and close beside her rode the dwarf on a sturdy Spanish mule.

III. BRADAMANTE AND THE WIZARD

Soon Bradamante and her ill-favoured companion came to the wooded slopes of the great mountains; and then they climbed steadily upwards, through pass and defile, until they emerged at last on the topmost ridge, whence they could look down on the fair realms of France and Spain which lay on either hand. There beneath them, on the southern side of the ridge, Bradamante could see the enchanted castle of glittering steel, from whose polished walls the sunshine was reflected with such strength, that the eye could scarcely bear to look upon them.

The warrior-maiden realised that the time had now come for her to obtain possession of the magic ring. She could not bring herself to kill the wretched dwarf, though no doubt he deserved death a dozen times. So, without a moment's warning, she seized the little scoundrel in her strong arms, and held him powerless, while she firmly bound him hand and foot to a tree with the bridle of his mule. Then, taking the magic ring from his finger and transferring it to her own, she went upon her way, leaving the dwarf screaming himself hoarse with imprecations and threats.

Yet, if she had slain the little thief she would have saved the hangman a task; for he was shortly afterwards strung up to a tree by some soldiers, who had released

him from his bonds, only to be robbed by the dwarf of all that they had.

Having secured possession of the precious ring, Bradamante followed a rough track, which led to the foot of the crag on which the enchanted castle stood. All round the rock she rode, until she found the narrow, slippery path which alone gave access to the steel walls. She rode up this path with many a halt and stumble; and on reaching the top, she seized the horn which hung by the castle gate, and blew such a blast that hill and valley, crag and glen, rang and rang again.

Before the sound had died away, the challenge was accepted, and the winged steed, with its master on its back, leapt from the lofty ramparts into the air, and soared in great circles above the maiden's head. Raven-black was the great horse, and raven-black was the armour of its silent rider. He was clad from head to foot in steel, but carried neither lance nor sword nor any offensive weapon. In his right hand he bore the magic shield of which Melissa had spoken, though its polished surface was now hidden by a covering of purple silk. In his left hand he held an open book, from which he read his spells and incantations, while he guided his horse by the pressure of his knees.

Bradamante feared neither shield nor spells, for she was armed with a ring more powerful than all. When the old wizard discovered that none of his enchantments had any effect upon his adversary, he was not a little disturbed. At last he removed the silken covering from his shield, and flashed its polished surface straight at Bradamante, not doubting that its magic lustre would

bring her to the ground, as it had many a knight and lady before.

Protected by the virtue of her ring, the noble damsel was in no way harmed by the dazzling brilliance of the shield; but knowing well what ought to follow, and wishing to bring the old magician within her reach, she sank from her horse to the ground, where she lay as if insensible.

With a cry of triumph, the magician brought his horse to earth, and replacing the silken covering of his shield, he took a stout chain which hung from his saddle-bow, with the intention of binding his prostrate captive. To his great astonishment, as he bent over the maiden, he felt himself seized in a grip which rendered him powerless, and before he fully realised what had happened, he was bound fast with his own chain.

Then Bradamante unlaced his helmet to slay him, and to her surprise she beheld the visage, not of a malignant wizard, but of a majestic and venerable old man. She sheathed her sword, looking in wonder at her captive, who cried to her in piteous tones: "Slay me, I pray you, gentle knight, for my power is broken and life is no longer worth living."

"I will not kill you," replied the maiden, "for to slay so old a man would be a dastardly deed; but your castle I will destroy, and its captives I will set at liberty."

At this, the old magician groaned and said: "All of them you may have, but spare me only my nephew Roger; whom I have loved and cherished from a baby; and leave me this castle in which I may preserve him from harm. I am that Atlantes who tended him as a



“ In a corner of the courtyard, the wizard raised a small slab of marble from the ground.”

child, and if I have entrapped knights and ladies in this castle, it is only that he might spend his days in worthy company."

At these words the face of the warrior-maiden hardened, and she replied: "Too long have you held the noble youth a close prisoner. He has deeds to do in the world, fame and fortune to win, and he shall go free with the other captives of your magic art. Now lead on, Atlantes, for I will not release you until you have destroyed this castle and the rock on which it stands."

It seemed at first as if Atlantes would rebel against this command, but Bradamante held her magic ring before his eyes, and at the sight his resistance broke down, and he consented to do her will. So the damsel loosed the chain from his limbs, and they passed together through the gateway of the castle, the doors swinging back on their hinges at a touch from Atlantes. In a corner of the courtyard, the wizard raised a small slab of marble from the ground, revealing a square space filled with rolls of parchment and curious vessels of stone and porcelain.

Atlantes cast the latter over the battlements of the castle into the depths below, and he destroyed the parchments in a flame which he caused to spurt miraculously from the castle walls. No sooner had he finished his work of destruction than a wonderful thing happened. The enchanted castle, with its glittering turrets and towers, its shining battlements and bastions, faded away into the empty air, leaving behind naught but a wild mountain cave, dank and drear, fit only as the habitation of the wolf or the bear.

From the mouth of this dark cave issued a procession of all the noble knights and fair ladies who had been kept captive by the Moorish wizard. Foremost amongst them was Roger, the noble prince who was the cause of all this enchantment. There, too, was Count Roland of France, followed by Gradasso, King of China, who had led a great host into Europe only to be captured himself by the cunning Atlantes. After him came Sacripant, King of Circassia, and Angelica, Princess of Cathay, and a host of noble dames and warriors who had been entrapped in the magician's castle of steel.

On seeing this gallant array, Bradamante turned to speak to Atlantes, but he had disappeared with his castle, nor was he ever seen on earth again.

As may be imagined, the noble company of lords and ladies were astonished beyond measure at the sudden disappearance of their prison-house, and when they realised what had happened, they gathered round Bradamante to thank her for restoring to them their liberty. When the noble maiden took off her helmet, and her rich brown hair fell over her mail-clad shoulders, they could not but wonder that so great a deed had been achieved by a gentle lady, and marvelled at her beauty no less than at her valour.

Thus did Bradamante bring to an end the adventure of the enchanted castle; but many were the perils and hardships which she had to undergo, before she gained the peace and happiness which had been foretold to her by Merlin the Wise. In the end she married that same Prince Roger whom she had delivered from the

castle of steel, and the two were wedded in the great cathedral of Paris.

Soon afterwards, an embassy came to them from the people of Bulgaria, offering them the throne of that country. This they willingly accepted, and were crowned at Adrianople three months later. King Roger and Queen Bradamante lived happily for the rest of their days, reigning over their subjects in great peace and prosperity; but they never forgot the stirring days when Bradamante overcame the great magician Atlantes, and delivered her husband from his enchanted castle of steel.

From Ariosto's "Orlando Furioso."





A · TALE · OF · THE · CID

THE great champion of the Spanish kings in their final struggles with their Moorish conquerors was a noble of Castille named Rodrigo Diaz. He was a man of great personal bravery, skilled in warfare, and a leader who possessed the rare power of inspiring his followers with all the confidence and enthusiasm which filled his own heart. With his eye upon them, the Spanish knights vied with one another in deeds of desperate valour, and even those of timid heart bore themselves like lions in the fight. Of him it was said, that "he knew how to make a good knight, as well as a groom knows how to make a good horse," a saying which is aptly illustrated by the following tale.

The Moors, who esteemed and honoured a valiant foeman, held good Rodrigo in as great consideration as the Christians. By them he was given the title of Cid, a word which, in their language, signifies Lord or Master, and this title was publicly bestowed upon him

by King Ferdinand of Castile, who commanded that he should ever after be known by that name.

The greatest of the Cid's numerous undertakings was the siege of the city of Valencia, which was at that time in the hands of the Moors, and was by far the wealthiest city of Spain. At the beginning of this long siege, the Spanish army was joined by one Martin Pelaez, a knight of Asturias, a nobleman great of body and strong of limb, a well-made man and of goodly appearance, but, alas! a coward at heart, who had in many places displayed his sad lack of courage.

The Cid was sorry when he saw him come, for he knew his reputation; but he would not let him perceive that he was not welcome, and determined that he would do his best to make the coward brave, whether he wished it or not. One day, it fell out that the Cid and his followers were making a great attack upon the town, and with them went this Martin Pelaez, well mounted and clad in splendid armour. Yet when he saw that the battle had begun, he fled to his lodging, where he hid himself until the Cid, having conquered the Moors, returned to his house to dinner.

Now it was the custom of the Cid to eat at a high table, seated on his bench at the head of the room, while Don Alvar and other knights who had won fame, ate at high tables in a different part of the room. The knights of less renown sat apart at other tables, and each one strove all that he could to gain the distinction of sitting at the table of Don Alvar and his companions, and thus the honour of the Cid was advanced.

Martin, thinking that none had observed his cowardly behaviour, was about to take his place among the lesser

knights, when the Cid went to him, and taking him by the hand, said: "You are not such a one to sit with these knights, for they are worth more than you and me. Come therefore and seat yourself at my table."

Martin thought that the Cid did this to honour him above all the others, and on the morrow, when he rode out with the rest towards Valencia, his heart was strengthened, and he was amongst the foremost to charge the Moors. When he was in their midst, however, his cowardice seized him once more, and turning rein, he fled hurriedly back to his lodging.

His conduct had been observed by the Cid, who was pleased to notice that, though he had acted badly, he had done better than on the previous day. When the Moors had been driven back into the city, the Cid returned to his lodging, and as he sat down to meat, he again took Martin by the hand and seated him by his side, saying: "Eat with me from this same dish, for you have deserved more honour this day than you did yesterday."

The cowardly knight wondered what was meant by this saying, and a feeling of dread filled his heart. However, he did as the Cid commanded him, but after he had dined, he went to his lodging and thought much upon what his lord had said to him. Then he perceived that his cowardly conduct had been observed, and understood that, for this cause, the Cid would not let him sit at board with the other knights, but had seated him with himself, more to affront him than to do him honour. Realising his baseness, he was filled with bitter shame, and resolved in his heart to do better in the future than he had ever done in the past.

On the next day, the Cid and his company rode out

again towards Valencia, and Martin was, as before, in the front of the charge. Courage, however, soon forsook him, and he was impelled to turn his horse and flee from the combat; but this time he steeled his heart, and presently, in the heat of the battle, his fear fell from him, and he conducted himself as well as the best knight there.

The Cid, who was in a place where he could see all that was going on, gave good heed to Martin's doings, and had great pleasure in observing how well he had forgotten the great fear which he was wont to have. At the end of the affray, the Cid and all his people returned to their lodging, and Martin went also to his house, leisurely and quietly, as a good knight should. When it was the hour of eating, the Cid waited for Martin, and taking him by the hand, said to him: "My friend, you shall sit by me no longer, for you deserve to sit henceforth with Don Alvar and these good knights, because the feats which you have done this day have made you a fit companion for them."

From that day forward, the knight Martin Pelaez was a right valiant and right worthy warrior, as he proved in all places where brave deeds were to be performed. When the Cid at last won the city of Valencia, there was no knight, save the great hero himself, who fought so valiantly, both in the battle and in the pursuit. For what he did that day, the Cid received him with the greatest honour, and thenceforward gave him a place in all his actions and in all his secrets, and was ever his great friend.

From the "Cronica del Cid." Translated by Robert Southey.



WITH fire and desolation the Moors are in Castile,
Five Moorish kings together, and all their vassals leal;
They've passed in front of Burgos, through the Oca Hills
they've run,
They've plundered Belforado, San Domingo's harm is done.

In Najara and Lograno, there's waste and disarray,
And now with Christian captives, a very heavy prey,
With many men and women, and boys and girls beside,
In joy and exultation to their own realms they ride.

For neither king nor noble would dare their path to cross,
Until the good Rodrigo heard of their harm and loss;
In old Bivar the castle he heard the tidings told,
(He was as yet a stripling, not twenty summers old.)

THE CID AND MOORISH KINGS 245

He mounted Bavioca, his friends he with him took,
He raised the country round him, no more such scorn to
brook;

He rode to the hills of Oca, where then the Moormen lay,
He conquered all the Moormen, and took from them their
prey.

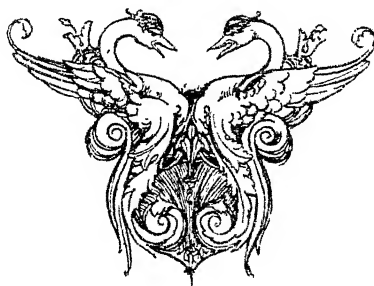
To every man who mounted he gave his share of gain,
Dispersing the great treasure the Saracens had ta'en;
The kings were all the booty that he had from the war,
Them led he to his castle, the stronghold of Bivar.

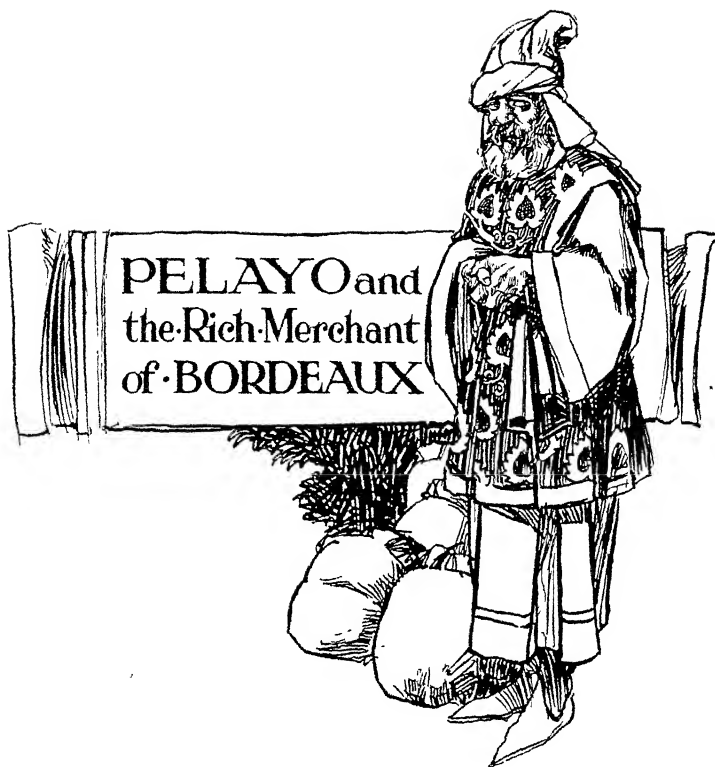
He brought them to his mother, proud dame that day was
she.

They crowned him for their Signior, and then he set them
free.

Home went they, much commending Rodrigo of Bivar,
And sent him lordly tribute from their Moorish lands afar.

*From a Ballad in the Collection of Escobar. Trans-
lated by J. S. Lockhart.*





ONE of the most famous of the Spanish heroes, in those evil days when Moslem and Christian strove for the mastery of the land, was a noble knight named Pelayo, who won from the Moors the fair realm of Leon, of which he made himself king. In his youth, Pelayo was reared by his widowed mother, the Duchess of Cantabria, in her castle in the heart of the Pyrenees, where he prepared himself for his future conflicts by hunting the bear, the wild boar and the wolf, with which the mountains abounded.

The chronicles record an instance of the hero's early prowess, in the course of one of his hunting expeditions in the immediate borders of France. The mountain passes were at this period much infested by marauders from Gascony, who were ready to lay their hands upon everything that they met. Though poor, they were proud, and there was not one of them that did not plume himself upon being a hidalgo,¹ and of noble blood. Whenever Pelayo, therefore, went out to hunt, he was attended by a page conducting his horse, with his buckler and lance, to be at hand in case of need.

At the head of a band of fourteen of these self-styled hidalgoes of Gascony was a broken-down cavalier by the name of Arnaud. He and four of his companions were well armed and mounted, but the rest were on foot and armed only with darts and javelins. This band was the terror of the border; here to-day, gone to-morrow; sometimes in one pass of the mountains, sometimes in another; sometimes they made descents into Spain, harassing the roads and marauding the country, and were over the mountains again and into France before a force could be sent against them.

It so happened that while Pelayo and a number of his huntsmen were on the border, the Gascon cavalier and his crew were out marauding. They had heard of a rich merchant of Bordeaux, who was to pass through the mountains on his way to one of the ports of Biscay, carrying with him much money for the purchase of merchandise. They determined to ease him of his money-bags; for, being hidalgoes who lived by the

¹ The lowest rank of the nobility.

sword, they considered all peaceful men as lawful spoil, sent by Heaven for the supply of men of valour and gentle blood.

As they lay in ambush in a lonely defile, they beheld the merchant approaching. He was mounted on a stately and well-fed steed; beside him on palfreys paced his wife, a comely dame, and his daughter, a damsel fair to look upon. A young man, his nephew, who acted as his clerk, rode with them, and a single servant followed.

When the travellers had advanced within the defile, the bandits rushed from behind a rock, and set upon them, crying: "Hold, and deliver up to us whatever wealth you have." The nephew fought valiantly and was slain; the servant fled; and the master, though little used to the exercise of arms, made courageous defence, having his wife and daughter and his money-bags at hazard. He was wounded in two places and overpowered.

The freebooters then searched for their booty, but not finding it, they set their swords to the breast of the merchant, demanding where was the money with which he was to traffic in Biscay.

"Oh, sirs!" cried the trembling merchant, "spare our lives and you shall have my money. A trusty servant is following me at no great distance with a stout hackney laden with bags of gold. It will not be long before he arrives here, and you shall have all that you demand."

Overjoyed at this intelligence, the Gascons bound their captives to trees and awaited the arrival of the treasure.

Meanwhile Pelayo was on a hill near a narrow pass, awaiting a wild boar which his huntsmen were to rouse. While thus posted, the merchant's servant, who had escaped, came running in breathless terror. Seeing Pelayo, he supposed him to be another of the robbers, and falling upon his knees he said in piteous tones: "Oh! most noble lord, spare my unworthy life, and I will serve you faithfully to the end of my days."

"Arise, man," cried Pelayo; "why should I take your life that have done me no wrong? What has so robbed you of courage that you take every one whom you meet for a robber or a murderer?"

"Oh, my poor master!" sobbed the servant, "by now he is doubtless robbed and slain. We were set upon by thieves, and I alone succeeded in escaping."

"Coward," thundered Pelayo, "why did you not stay to defend your master? But I waste my breath in talking to such as you. Lead me instantly to the scene of the robbery."

Taking his armour from his page, he put on his helmet, slung his buckler round his neck, took lance in hand, and mounting his horse, set off under the guidance of the trembling servant. At the same time, he dispatched the page to summon as many of his huntsmen as possible to his assistance.

When the robbers saw Pelayo advancing through the forests, the sun sparkling upon his rich armour, they considered him a new prize, and Arnaud and two of his companions, mounting their horses, advanced to meet him. Pelayo put himself in a narrow pass between two rocks, where he could only be attacked in front, and,

bracing his buckler and lowering his lance, awaited their onslaught.

"Who and what are you?" cried he; "and what seek you in this land?"

"We are huntsmen in quest of game," replied Arnaud, with a laugh, "and lo! it runs into our toils."

"By my faith," said Pelayo, "you will find the game easier roused than taken. Have at you for a villain."

So saying, he put spurs to his horse and charged upon him. Arnaud was totally unprepared for so sudden an assault, having scarce anticipated a defence. He hastily couched his lance, but it merely glanced on the shield of Pelayo, who sent his own through the middle of his breast, throwing him out of the saddle to the earth. One of the other robbers made at Pelayo, and wounded him slightly in the side, but received a blow on the head which cleft his steel cap and sank into his brain. His companion, seeing him fall, galloped off through the forest.

By this time, three or four of the robbers on foot had come up and assailed Pelayo. He received two of their darts on his buckler, a javelin grazed his cuirass, and his horse received two wounds. Pelayo then rushed upon them and struck one dead; the others, seeing several huntsmen advancing, took to flight; two were overtaken and made prisoners, the rest escaped by clambering among rocks and precipices.

The good merchant of Bordeaux and his family beheld this scene with trembling and amazement. They looked upon Pelayo as something almost more than mortal, for they had never witnessed such feats of arms. Still, they



"They fell at his feet and implored his mercy."—See p. 252.

considered him as a leader of some rival band of robbers, and when he came up and loosened the bonds by which they were fastened to the trees, they fell at his feet and implored his mercy.

"Calm your fears, I pray you," said Pelayo gently. "I am no robber, but a gentleman of this neighbourhood who is glad to have been of some slight service to you."

It was, however, with difficulty that he could pacify their fears. The ladies were the first to be reassured, especially the merchant's daughter, for the young maid was struck with the gentle demeanour and noble countenance of Pelayo, and said to herself: "Surely nothing wicked can dwell in so heavenly a form."

Pelayo now ordered that the wounds of the merchant should be dressed, and his own examined. When his cuirass was taken off, his wound was found to be but slight; yet his men were so exasperated at seeing his blood, that they would have put the two captive Gascons to death, had he not forbidden them.

He then sounded his hunting-horn, and the notes echoed from rock to rock, and were answered by shouts and horns from various parts of the mountains. The merchant's heart misgave him, for he again thought that he was among robbers. Nor were his fears allayed, when he beheld, in a little while, more than forty men assembling together, clad in hunting-dresses, with boarspears, darts and hunting-swords, and each leading a hound by a long cord.

All this was a new and a wild world to the astonished merchant, nor was his uneasiness abated when he beheld his servant arrive, leading the hackney laden with money. "Certainly," said he to himself, "this will be

too tempting a spoil for these wild men of the mountains."

The huntsmen brought with them a boar which they had killed, and, being hungry from the chase, they lighted a fire at the foot of a tree, and each cutting off such portion of the boar as he liked best, roasted it at the fire, and ate it with bread taken from his wallet. The merchant, his wife and daughter looked at all this and wondered, for they had never beheld so savage a repast.

Pelayo then inquired of them if they did not desire to eat, and they were too much in awe of him to decline, though they felt a loathing at the idea of this hunters' fare. Linen cloths were therefore spread under the shade of a great oak, to screen them from the sun; and when they had seated themselves, they were served, to their astonishment, not with the flesh of the boar as they expected, but with dainty viands, such as the merchant had scarcely hoped to find outside of the walls of his native city of Bordeaux.

While they were eating, the young damsel, the daughter of the merchant, could not keep her eyes from Pelayo. Gratitude for his protection and admiration of his valour had filled her heart; and when she regarded his noble countenance, now that he had laid aside his helmet, she thought that he looked like one of the gods of old come to earth.

The repast being over, Pelayo offered to conduct the merchant and his family through the passes of the mountains, which were still dangerous from the scattered band of Gascons. The bodies of the slain were buried, and the little party then set off through the steep and winding defiles of the Pyrenees.

At length they came to a place where the forests and rocks terminated, and a secure road lay before them. Then Pelayo paused to take his leave, appointing a number of his followers to attend and guard those whom he had saved to the nearest town. When they came to part, the merchant and his wife were loud in their thanks and benedictions, but for some time the daughter spoke never a word.

At length she raised her eyes, and looking wistfully at Pelayo, she said: "Sir, I know that I am unworthy of the notice of so noble a cavalier, but suffer me to place this ring on a finger of your right hand, with which you have so bravely rescued us from death. When you regard it, you shall consider it as a memorial of your own valour, and not of one who is too humble to be remembered by you."

With these words, she drew a ring from off her finger and put it upon the finger of Pelayo; and having done so, she trembled at her own boldness, and stood as one abashed, with her eyes cast upon the earth.

Pelayo was moved at her words, and replied: "Gentle friend, I accept your present, and will wear it in remembrance of your goodness."

Thus they parted, and Pelayo and his huntsmen remained for some time on a cliff on the verge of the forest, watching that no evil befell them about the skirts of the mountain; and the damsel often turned her head to look at him, until she could no longer see him for the distance and for the tears that dimmed her eyes.

*From the "Destruycion de España." Rendered
into English by Washington Irving.*



GARCI PEREZ OF VARGAS

KING FERDINAND alone did stand one day upon the hill,
Surveying all his leagues, and the ramparts of Seville;
The sight was grand, when Ferdinand by proud Seville was
lying,
O'er tower and tree far off to see the Christian banner flying.

Down chanced the king his eye to fling, where far the camp
below

Two gentlemen along the glen were riding soft and slow;
As void of fear each cavalier seemed to be riding there,
As some strong hound may pace around the roebuck's
thickest lair.

It was Don Garci Perez, and he would breathe the air,
And he had ta'en a knight with him, that as lief had been
elsewhere;

For soon this knight to Garci said: "Ride, ride we, or we're
lost!

I see the glance of helm and lance—it is the Moorish host."

The Lord of Vargas turned him round, his trusty squire was
near,

The helmet on his brow he bound, his gauntlet grasped his
spear;

With that, upon his saddle-tree he planted him right steady,
"Now come," quoth he, "whoe'er they be, I trow they'll
find us ready."

256 TALES OF FOREIGN LANDS

By this, the knight who rode with him had turned his horse's
head,
And up the glen in fearful trim unto the camp had fled.
"Ha! gone?" quoth Garci Perez;—he smiled, and said no
more,
But slowly with his esquire rode as he rode before.

It was the Count Lorenzo, just then it happened so,
He took his stand by Ferdinand, and with him gazed below;
"My liege," quoth he, "seven Moors I see a-coming from
the wood,
Now bring they all the blows they may, I trow they'll find as
good;
But 'tis Don Garci Perez, if his cognizance they know,
I guess it will be little pain to give them blow for blow."

The Moors from forth the greenwood came riding one by
one,
A gallant troop with armour resplendent in the sun;
Full haughty was their bearing, as o'er the sward they came,
While the calm Lord of Vargas his march was still the same.

They stood drawn up in order, while past them all rode he,
For when upon his shield they saw the Red Cross and the
Tree,
And the wings of the Black Eagle, that o'er his crest were
spread,
They knew 'twas Garci Perez, and ne'er a word they said.

He took the casque from off his head, and gave it to the
squire.
"My friend," quoth he, "no need I see why I my brows
should tire."

But as he doffed his helmet, he saw his scarf was gone ;
" I dropped it sure," quoth Garci, " when I put my helmet
on."

He looked around and saw the scarf, for still the Moors were
near,
And they had picked it from the sward, and looped it on a
spear.

" These Moors," quoth Garci Perez, " uncourteous Moors
they be,
Now, by my soul, the scarf they stole, yet durst not question
me !

" Now, reach once more my helmet." The esquire said him
nay,

" For a silken string why should ye fling perchance your life
away? "

" I had it from my lady," quoth Garci, " long ago,
And never Moor that scarf, be sure, in proud Seville shall
show."

But when the Moslem saw him, they stood in firm array,
He rode among their armed throng, he rode right furiously ;
" Stand, stand, ye thieves and robbers, lay down my lady's
pledge ! "

He cried, and even as he cried, they felt his falchion's edge.

That day when the Lord of Vargas came to the camp alone,
The scarf, his lady's largess, around his breast was thrown ;
Bare was his head, his sword was red, and from his pommel
strung

Seven turbans green, sore hacked I ween, before bold Perez
hung.

*From an old Spanish Ballad. Translated by J. S.
Lockhart.*

THE KNIGHT of the RUEFUL COUN- TEN-ANCE

THE HELMET
OF MAMBRINO



MANY years after the last of the knights of old had been laid in his grave, there lived in Spain, in the district of La Mancha, an elderly gentleman named Quixada, who, though of humble means, came of very good family. Having no occupation, he passed all his days reading the old books of chivalry and knightly adventure, and to such an extent did he devote himself to this pursuit that his brain was thereby turned, and the poor gentleman lost his reason.

Then he was seized with the crazy notion that he should make a knight-errant of himself, and roam over the world, in full armour and on horseback, in search of

wrongs to right and enemies to overthrow. The more he thought of his idea, the better it pleased him, and without delay he proceeded to make ready to carry his scheme into execution.

The first thing he did was to clean up some old and rusty armour which had belonged to his great-grandfather. He was in despair, however, to find that he had no helmet, the only headpiece he could find being a steel cap. So he ingeniously contrived a half-helmet of pasteboard, which, when fitted on to the cap, made it look, from a distance, as good a helmet as was ever worn by Roland or the Cid.

He next proceeded to inspect the only horse he possessed, a gaunt and bony animal of advanced years; and thinking that the steed of so famous a knight should have some distinctive title, he bestowed upon the sorry hack the full-sounding name of Rozinante. Having found a distinguished name for his horse, he was anxious that his own should be no less romantic, and after much reflection he decided to call himself Don Quixote. But as this did not entirely satisfy him, he at length resolved to add to it the name of his native place, and to style himself in full Don Quixote de la Mancha.

His preparations now being completed, he clad himself in his armour, donned his patched-up helmet, took his buckler and lance, and rode forth on his horse Rozinante in search of adventure. He started on his travels in the highest spirits, expecting to find a dragon, or a lady in distress, behind every bush; but soon a terrible thought struck him. He had no squire to follow

him, or liege-lady for whom to do battle. These deficiencies he proceeded at once to set right, and chose as his lady a country girl from the neighbouring village of Toboso, whose humble name he changed to Dulcinea del Toboso. It was more difficult to obtain a squire, but at length he persuaded an honest but ignorant farm-labourer, named Sancho Panza, to follow his fortunes, persuading him that in time he would conquer some island, of which the worthy Sancho should be made governor.

Then, in company with his squire, mounted upon a humble ass, the great knight Don Quixote de la Mancha, called by some the Knight of the Rueful Countenance, rode away to win riches and great renown. Before very long, they perceived in front of them a mounted man who wore on his head something that shone like gold.

"If I mistake not," said the knight, "an adventure is at hand, for here comes towards us one who wears on his head the helmet of Mambrino."

"Who is Mambrino, master?" asked Sancho.

"Ignorant man!" replied Don Quixote. "Do you not know that Mambrino was a valiant Moorish king? His helmet had such magic power that no one who wore it in battle could be wounded."

"A very useful headpiece indeed," said Sancho; "but I can give your worship many reasons to show that this is no helmet of Mambrino which we see before us."

"A fig for your reasons!" exclaimed Don Quixote. "Tell me, do you not see yonder knight coming towards us, mounted on a dappled grey steed, and with a helmet of gold upon his head?"

“All I can see,” answered his squire, “is a man on a grey ass like my own, who has something that shines on his head.”

“Well, that is the helmet of Mambrino,” said Don Quixote. “Stand to one side and leave me alone with him. You shall see how I shall soon bring this adventure to an end, and without saying a word possess myself of the helmet which I have always ardently desired.”

The truth of the matter concerning the helmet was this. A man who lived in the neighbourhood had fallen sick, and had sent for the nearest barber to shave and bleed him. The good man mounted his ass and set off on his way, carrying the brass basin which he was accustomed to use; but as he found the basin somewhat cumbersome to carry, he placed it upon his head, where, being new, it glittered at half-a-league’s distance.

Don Quixote charged upon this barber at top speed, with his lance pointed low, fully determined to run him through and through; and as he reached him he cried: “Defend yourself, and yield to me that helmet which cannot be your lawful property.”

The terrified barber had no other way of saving himself from the stroke of the lance, but to let himself fall from his ass. This he straightway proceeded to do, and no sooner had he touched the ground, than he sprang up and sped away across the plain faster than the wind, leaving the basin lying on the ground behind him.

Great was the delight of Don Quixote, and he sent his squire to pick up the helmet. When the latter had brought it to him, he turned it over and over in his hands, searching for the vizor; and not finding it, he



said: "Clearly the pagan for whom this helmet was first made must have had a large head, but even so the half of it is wanting."

At this Sancho could not restrain his laughter, and his master asked him sternly what he found to cause him so much amusement. Sancho, fearing the knight's wrath, checked his smiles and replied: "I cannot help laughing when I think of the great head the pagan must have had. But to me the helmet looks exactly like an ordinary barber's basin."

"Do you know what I suspect, Sancho?" said Don Quixote. "I believe that this wonderful helmet came, by some strange account, into the hands of some one who did not recognise its value. But seeing that it was

of the purest gold, he melted down one half of it for his own purposes, and the other half he made into what, I must confess, looks like a barber's basin. This transformation makes no difference to me, for I know what it really is; and when I reach the next village where there is a blacksmith, I will have it restored to its proper condition. Meanwhile I will wear it in place of my own headpiece, which, in truth, is not so strong as I could wish it to be."

"But will your worship tell me," said Sancho, "what we are to do with this dapple-grey steed which looks like a grey ass? That pagan whom you overthrew is not likely to come back for it, and the ass is a good one."

"Leave the horse, or ass, or whatever you like to call it," replied his master, "for no knight ever took the horse of a conquered opponent, unless he had lost his own in the combat. Perchance, when its owner sees that we have gone, he will come back for it."

"Truly the laws of chivalry are strict," grumbled Sancho. "I would like to take the ass, or at least to change it for my own, which does not seem to me such a good one. But surely I can at least change the harness."

"I am not quite certain on that point," answered the knight, "and until I have better information I give you permission to change the harness, if you have need of it."

At this Sancho was greatly pleased, and, stripping the barber's ass of its handsome trappings, he speedily placed them upon his own beast, which was hardly to be recognised in its new finery. Then he took out some

food which he found in the barber's saddle-bags, and he and his master broke their fast upon it, washing the meal down with the water of a neighbouring brook.

II. THE ADVENTURE OF THE GALLEY-SLAVES

Then, refreshed and cheered, Don Quixote and his squire set off along the high road, discoursing pleasantly as they went concerning matters of chivalry. So engrossed was the knight in his conversation that he did not perceive a mournful procession which was coming towards him. There were about a dozen men on foot, with chains about their necks, stringing them together like beads on a necklace, and all of them had also heavy fetters on their hands. With them went four armed men, two on horseback and two on foot.

"Look, master!" cried Sancho. "Here comes a chain of convicts, sent to the galleys by the king's orders."

At this the knight raised his eyes and saw the sorry gang. "Sent to the galleys, are they?" quoth he. "Then I presume that they proceed thither against their own will."

"That is so," replied Sancho. "Because of the crimes they have committed, they are forced to serve in the king's galleys."

"If they are forced against their will to serve the king," replied Don Quixote, "then it is clearly my duty as a good knight to set them free, for I am sworn to succour the wretched and oppressed."

"But, master, I beseech you, think a moment," cried Sancho, terrified at the knight's intention. "The king

is not using force, or doing wrong to these persons; he is merely punishing them for their crimes."

To this Don Quixote paid no heed, and as the galley-slaves had by this time come up to him, he courteously asked one of the soldiers in charge of them to tell him why these people were being led away in chains.

The guard answered curtly that they were criminals going to the galleys, and this was all he had any business to know.

"Nevertheless," replied the knight, "I should like to know from each of them separately the cause of his misfortune." So civilly did he speak that the guard was persuaded to give him the permission he desired, and which, indeed, he would have taken even if it had not been granted.

So Don Quixote advanced towards the chain, and asked the first man why he was now in such an unhappy position.

"Alas! sir," said the galley-slave, "it was for being in love."

"For that only!" replied the knight. "That seems a slight offence. I myself might well be sent to the galleys for that, as I am in love with a peerless lady, the fair Dulcinea del Toboso."

"Ah, your honour," replied the man, with a grin, "what I fell in love with was a basket of fine linen which did not belong to me, and for this they gave me a hundred lashes on the back and sent me to the galleys."

Others of the convicts explained their offences in like manner, and many a plausible tale did Don Quixote listen to and believe. Lastly he came to one who was so

bound with chains, that he could not raise his hands to his mouth or bend his head to his hands. On asking why this man carried so many more chains than the others, he was told by the guard that it was because he had committed more crimes than all the rest put together. The soldier added that the name of this convict was Gines de Passamonte, and that he was so daring a villain that special precautions had to be taken to prevent the possibility of his escape.

When he had listened patiently to all that he was told, Don Quixote said to the guards: "Gentlemen, these poor fellows have done no harm to you. If they have sinned, they will be punished elsewhere. Who knows whether the judge who condemned them was not mistaken, or whether, under torture, they have confessed to crimes which they never committed? I am myself persuaded that this is the case, and therefore I beg you to set them free. This request I make gently and quietly, but if you refuse to comply with it, this lance and sword, together with the might of my arm, shall compel you to do as I ask."

"This is a fine piece of pleasantry!" cried one of the soldiers. "So you would have us let the king's prisoners go free just because it is your wish. Go your way, sir, and good luck to you. Put that basin straight on your head, and do not waste your time looking for five feet on a cat."

Enraged at the man's words, Don Quixote fell upon him so suddenly that, without giving him time to defend himself, he brought him to the ground sorely wounded with a lance-thrust. The other guards stood thunder-

struck at this unexpected event, but, recovering presence of mind, they prepared to attack Don Quixote, who was awaiting their onslaught with great calmness.

But, for all his valour, it would have gone ill with him if the galley-slaves had not taken advantage of the confusion to break their chains, a matter which immediately distracted the attention of the soldiers. The worthy Sancho had succeeded in freeing Gines de Passamonte, who, falling upon the dismounted guard, took from him his sword and musket. Levelling the latter at the other soldiers, he so frightened them that they took to flight, followed by showers of stones which the released galley-slaves hurled at them.

Don Quixote then called the liberated convicts around him, and addressed them thus: "Sirs, you have seen, by manifest proof, the benefit you have received from me. In return for this, I desire that you should immediately proceed to the city of Toboso, laden with the chains which I have taken off your necks, and present yourselves there to the lady Dulcinea del Toboso, telling her that you come at the command of her true knight, him of the Rueful Countenance. Furthermore, you must recount to her the full particulars of this notable adventure, up to the recovery of your liberty. This done, you may go where you will, and good fortune attend you."

At this the convicts roared with laughter, and Gines de Passamonte explained that if they were to travel along the highway together and in broad daylight, they would soon find themselves again in chains.

The refusal of his request so stirred Don Quixote to

wrath that he cried: "Fellow, you shall go yourself alone, with your tail between your legs, and the whole chain on your back."

Upon which Passamonte, whose temper was none of the sweetest, gave a sign to his companions, and they began to shower stones on Don Quixote at such a rate that he was brought to the ground. At once they snatched from his head the brass basin, with which they beat him until it fell to pieces. They then took the cloak which he wore over his armour, and also stripped Sancho of his coat, leaving him in his shirt-sleeves. After which they went each on his own way, more solicitous of keeping out of the public gaze, than of presenting themselves before that peerless lady Dulcinea del Toboso.

The ass and Rozinante, Sancho and Don Quixote, were all left upon the field; the ass with drooping head, shaking his ears from time to time as if he thought that the storm of stones was not yet over; Rozinante stretched beside his master, for he, too, had been brought to the ground by a stone; and Don Quixote raging to find himself so served by the very persons for whom he had done so much.

From Cervantes' "Don Quixote."